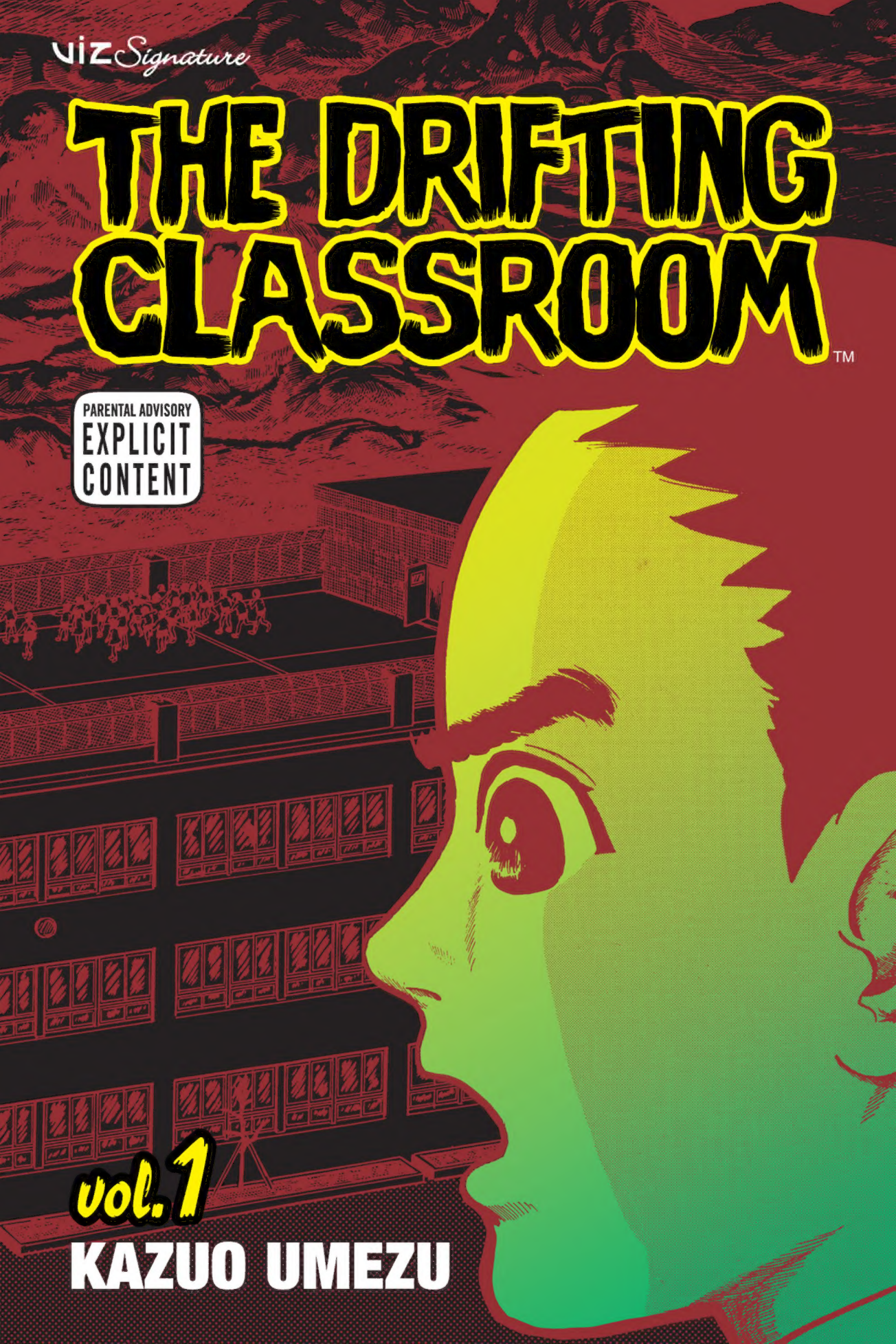
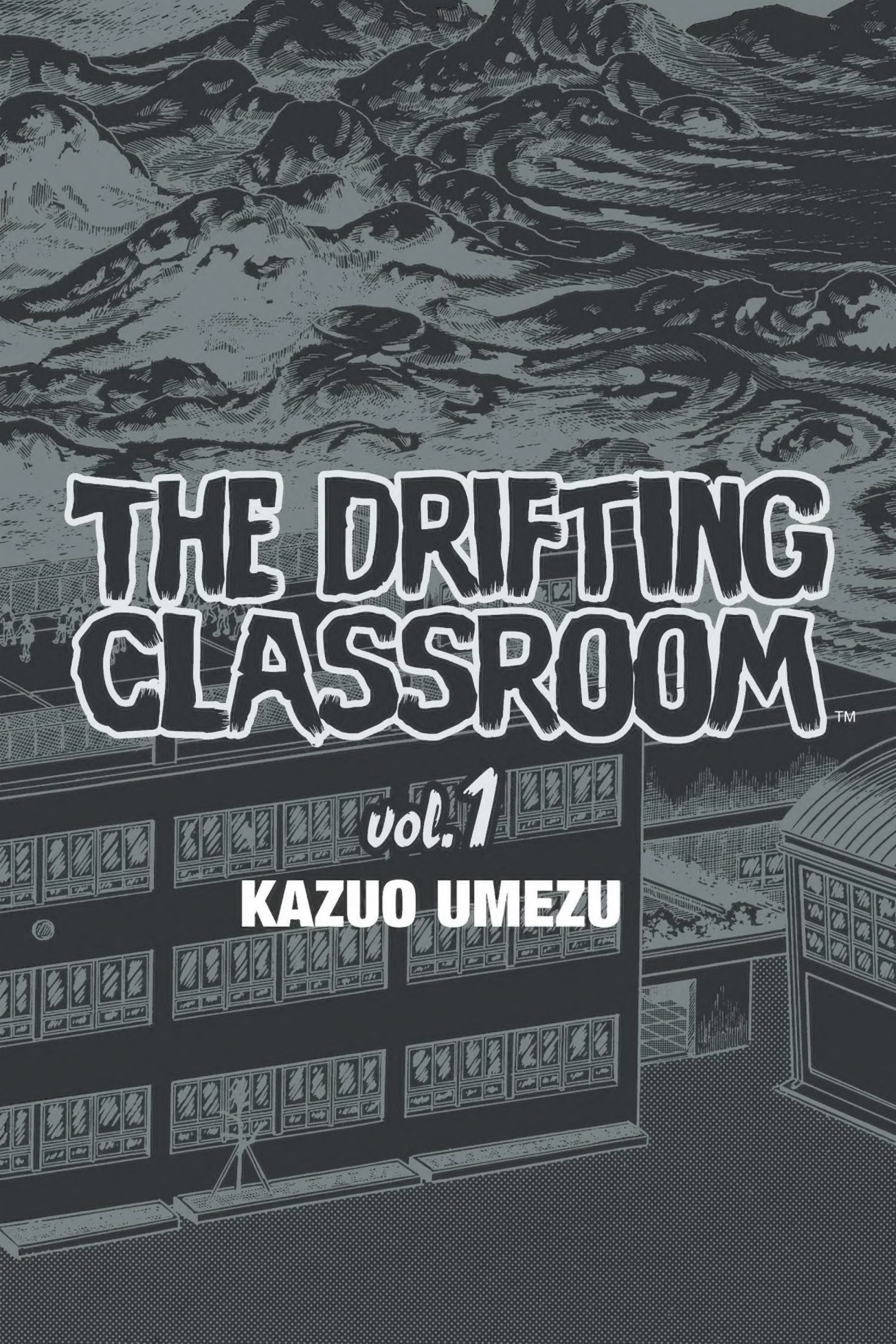
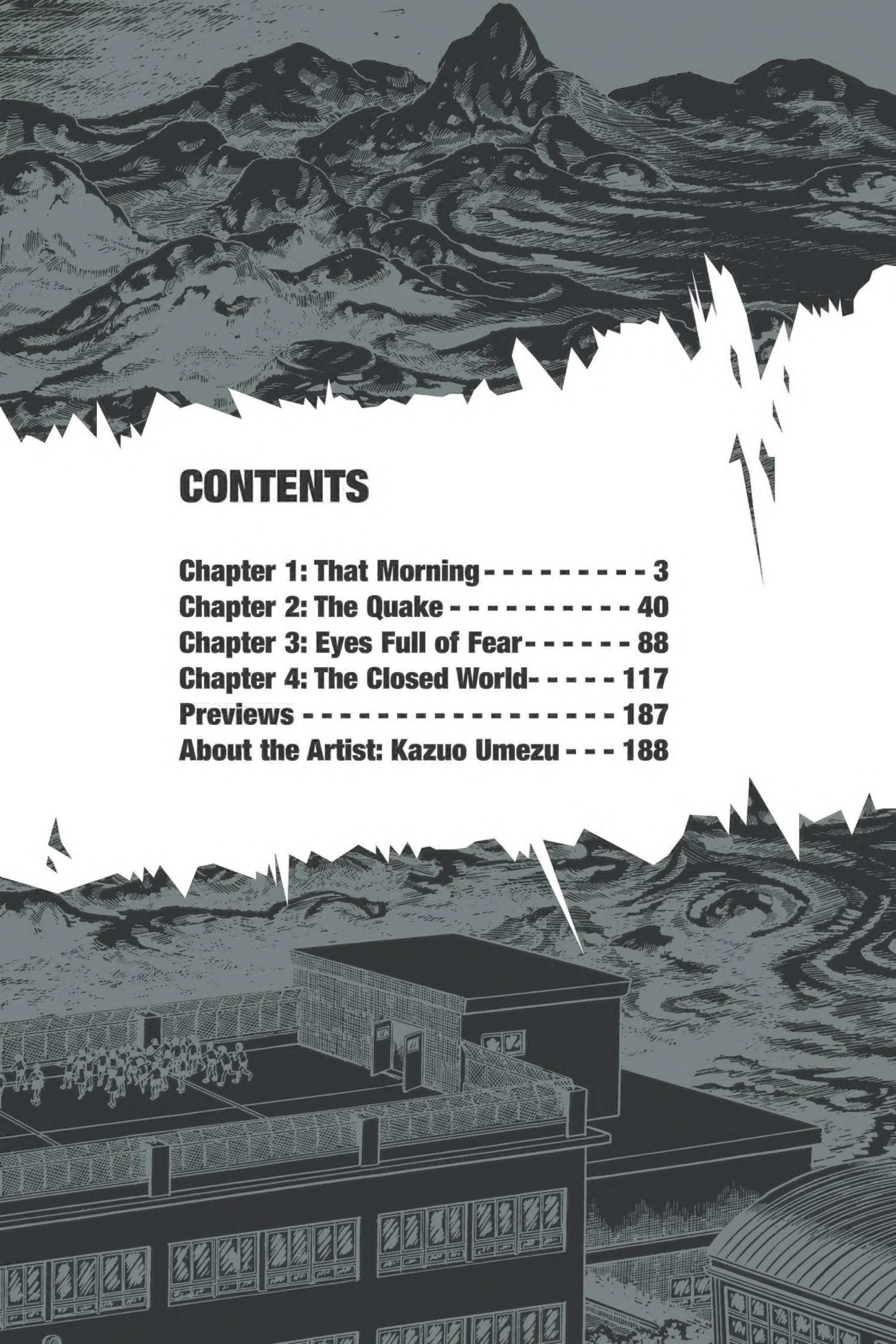

viz Signature
THE DRIFTING CLASSROOM™
PARENTAL ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT
vol. 1
KAZUO UMEZU


THE DRIFTING CLASSROOM™
vol. 1
KAZUO UMEZU



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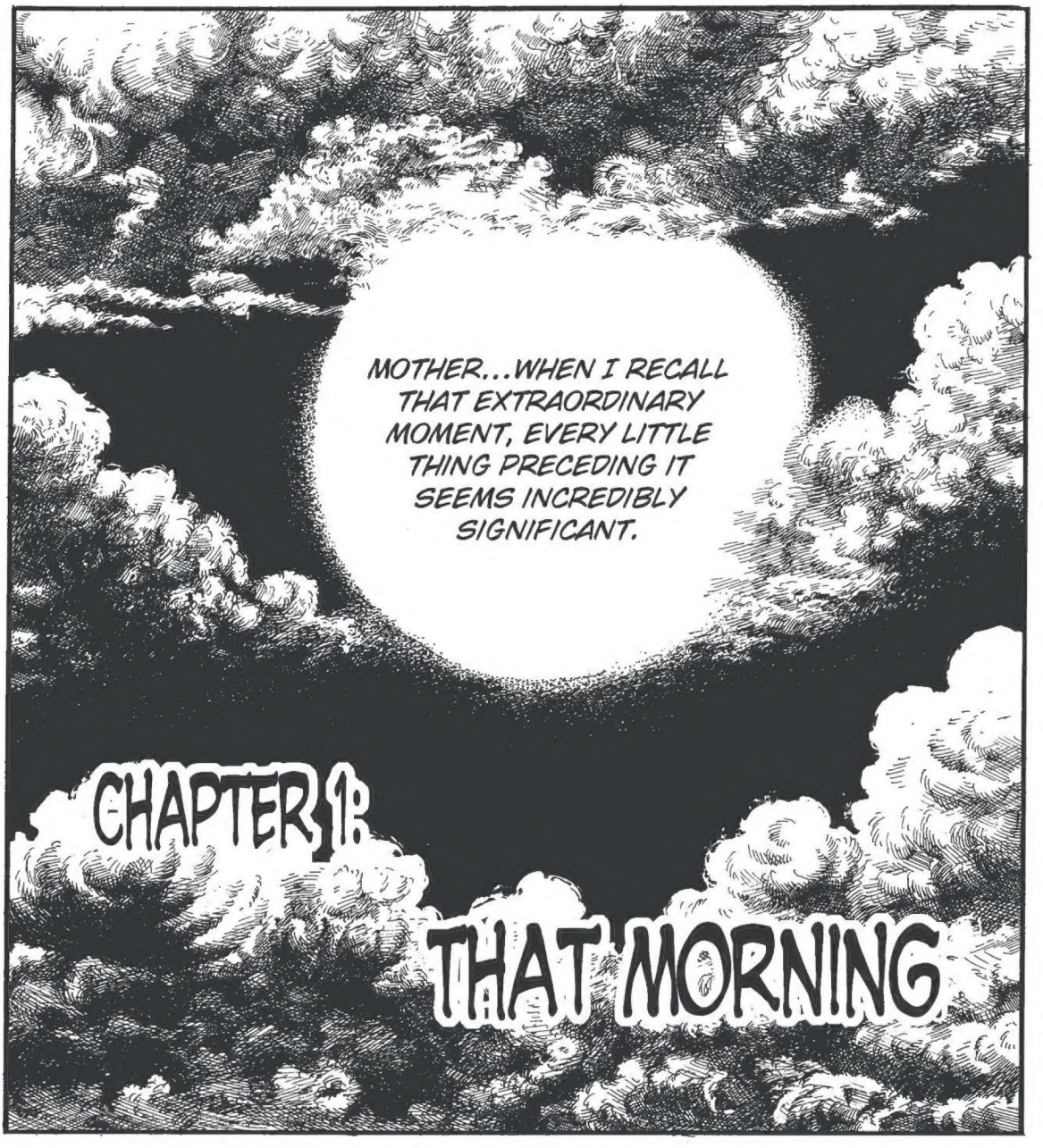
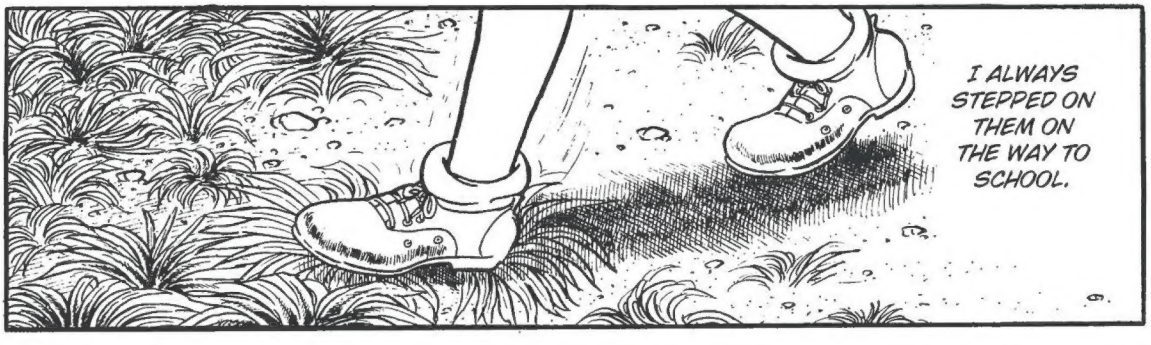
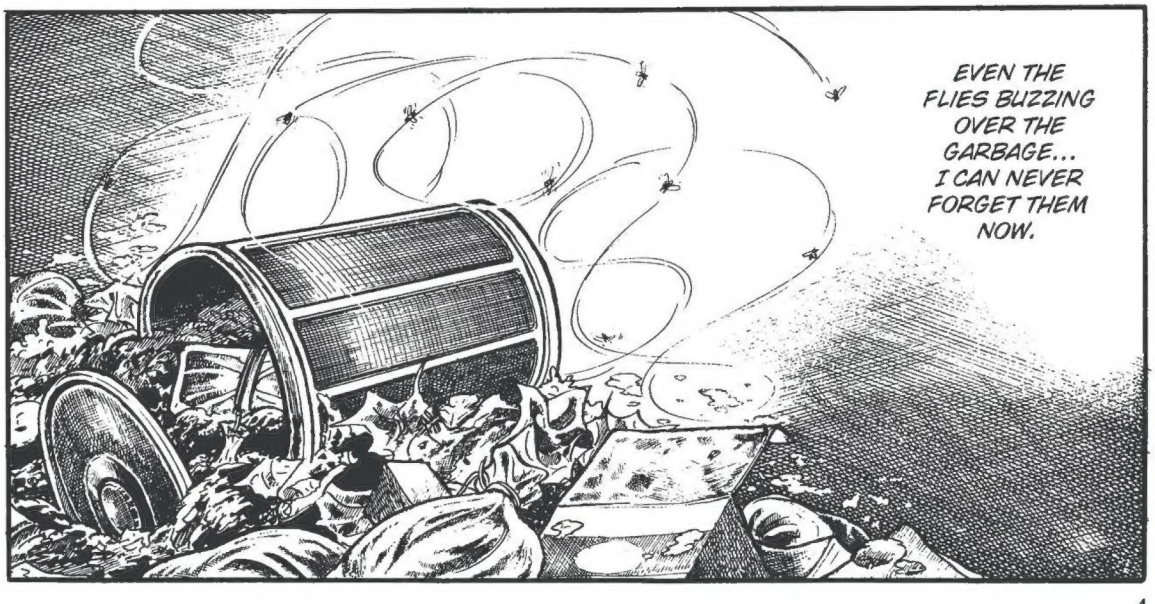

MOTHER...WHEN I RECALL THAT EXTRAORDINARY MOMENT, EVERY LITTLE THING PRECEDING IT SEEMS INCREDIBLY SIGNIFICANT.
CHAPTER 1:
THAT MORNING

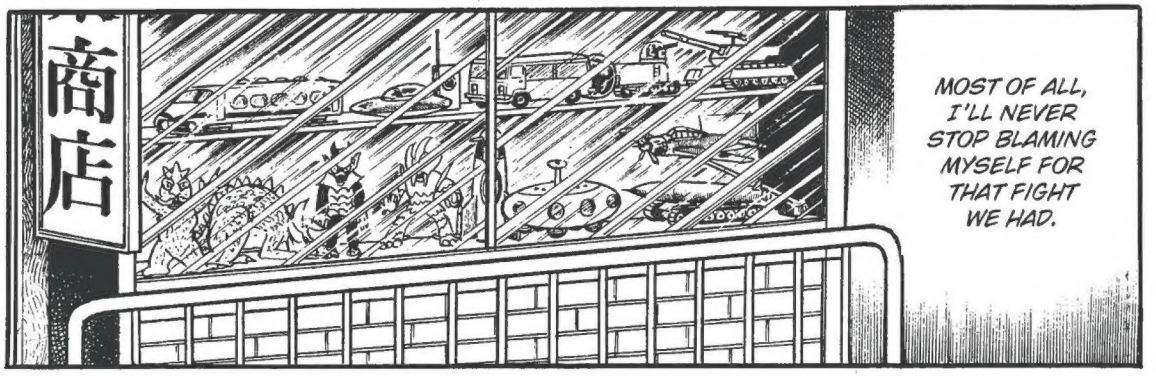
THE CLOUDS IN THE SKY...

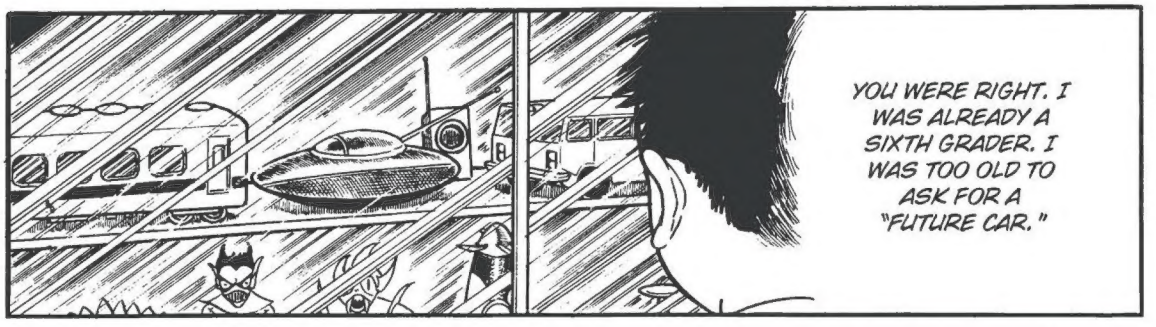
THE TREES I SAW EVERY DAY...

THE OVER-GROWN WEEDS I KEPT ON TRYING TO TRAMPLE.


I ALWAYS STEPPED ON THEM ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL.

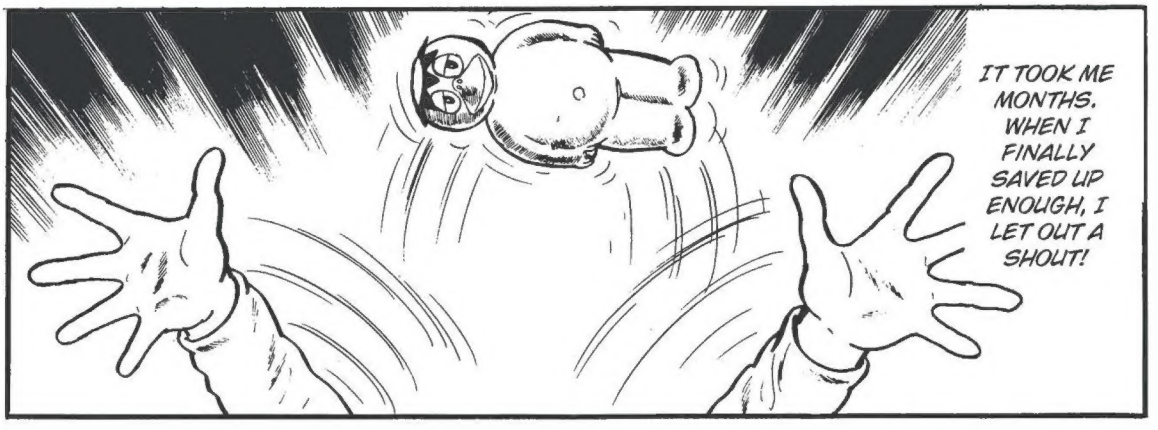

EVEN THE FLIES BUZZING OVER THE GARBAGE... I CAN NEVER FORGET THEM NOW.

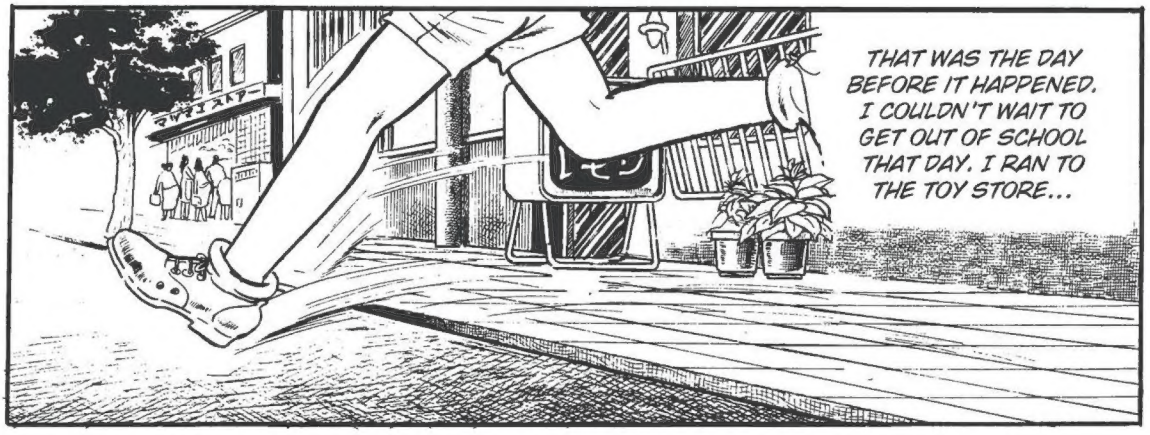

商店
MOST OF ALL, I'LL NEVER STOP BLAMING MYSELF FOR THAT FIGHT WE HAD.

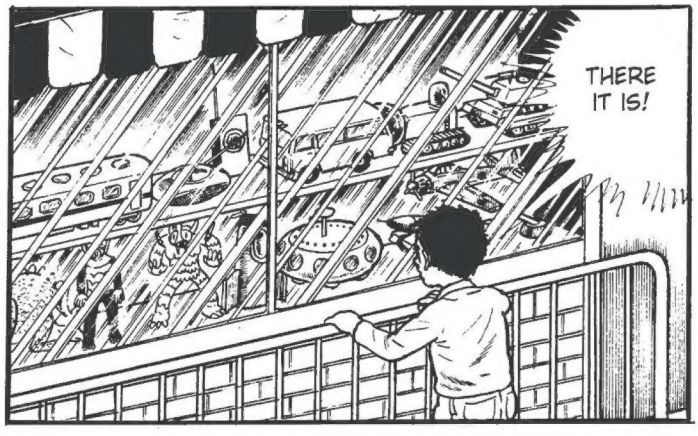

YOU WERE RIGHT. I WAS ALREADY A SIXTH GRADER. I WAS TOO OLD TO ASK FOR A "FUTURE CAR."

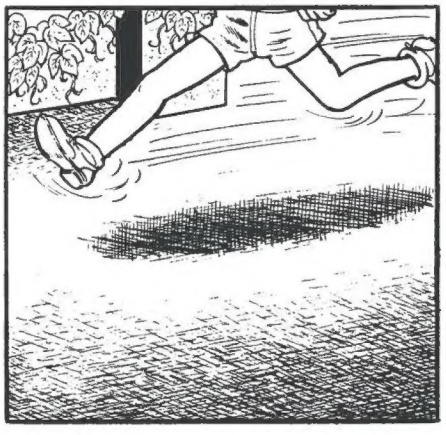
BUT I WANTED TO HAVE ONE, BECAUSE YOU COULD OPERATE IT BY MICROPHONE.

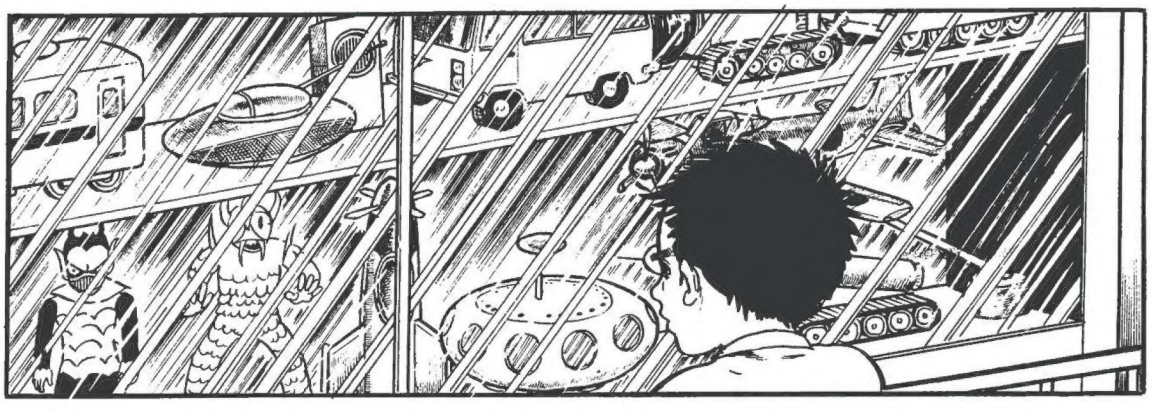
I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T BUY ONE, SO I SECRETLY SAVED UP MONEY ON MY OWN.

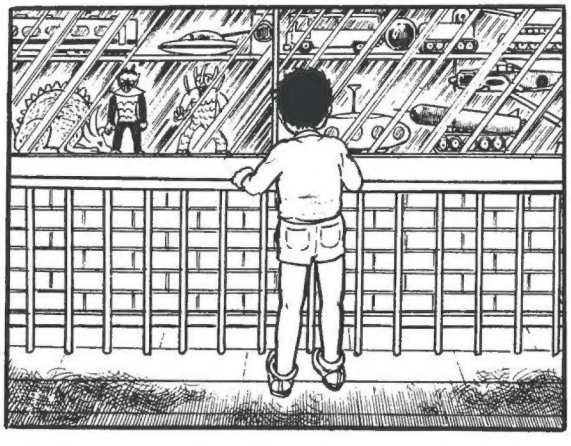

IT TOOK ME MONTHS. WHEN I FINALLY SAVED UP ENOUGH, I LET OUT A SHOUT!


THAT WAS THE DAY BEFORE IT HAPPENED. I COULDN'T WAIT TO GET OUT OF SCHOOL THAT DAY. I RAN TO THE TOY STORE...

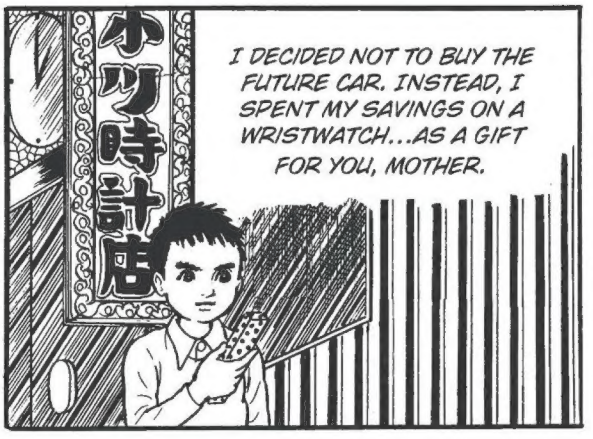

THERE IT IS!



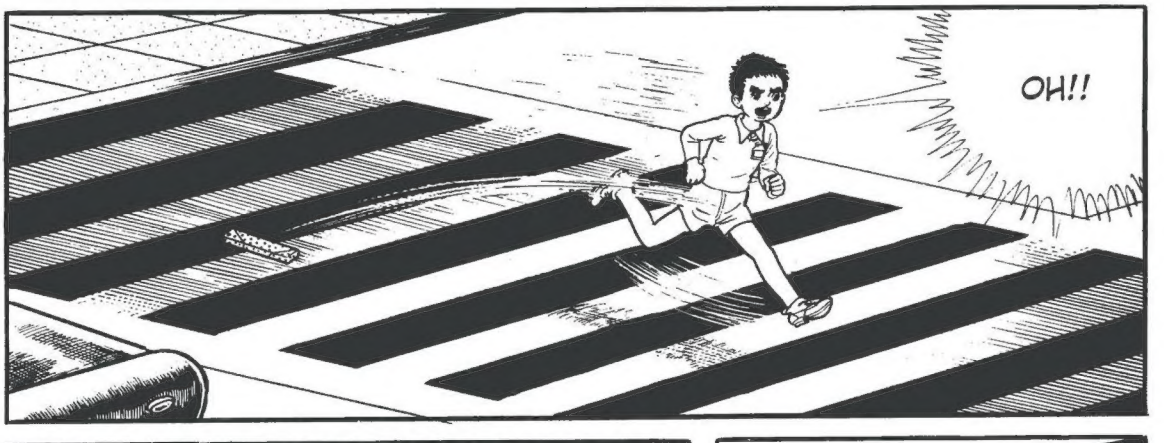


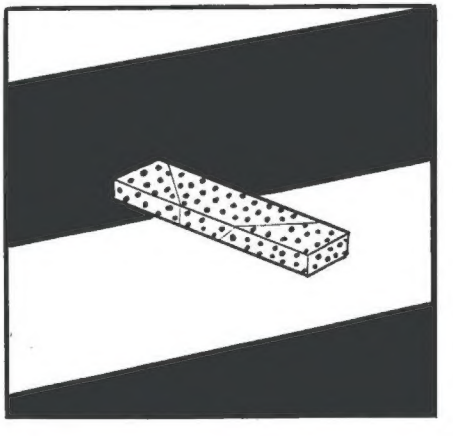


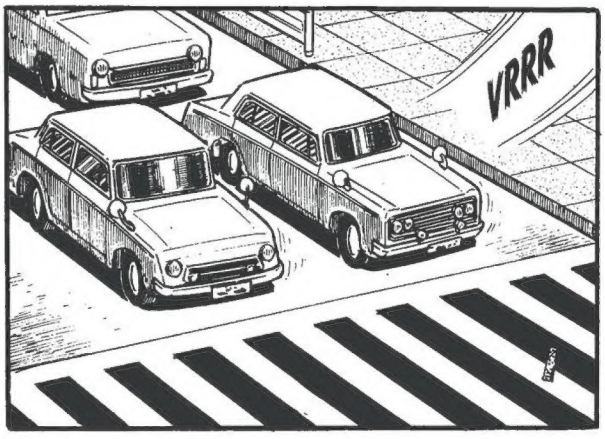
BUT AS I STOOD THERE LOOKING AT IT, I HAD A CHANGE OF HEART.

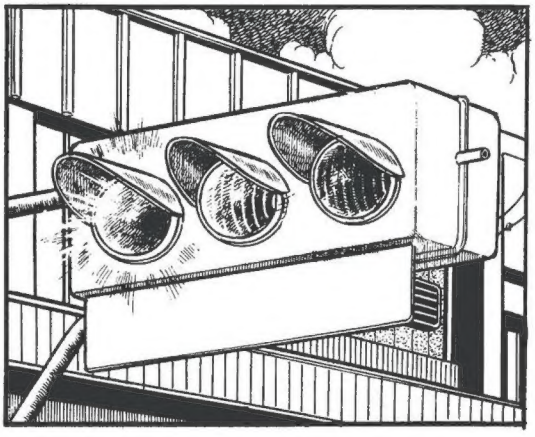

小川時計店
I DECIDED NOT TO BUY THE FUTURE CAR. INSTEAD, I SPENT MY SAVINGS ON A WRISTWATCH...AS A GIFT FOR YOU, MOTHER.

AAA
I REMEMBERED YOU SAID YOU WANTED A NEW WATCH!
VRRR

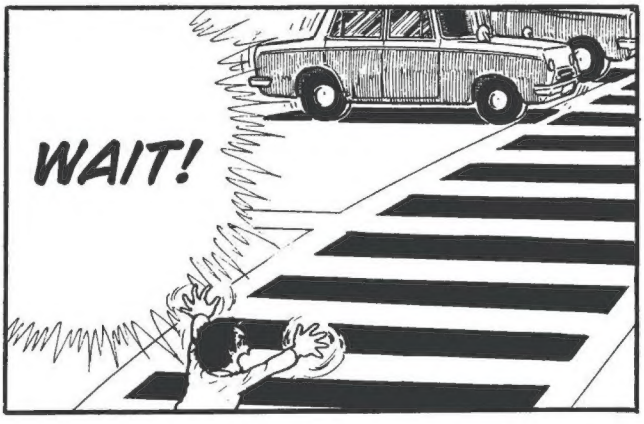

OH!!




VRRR

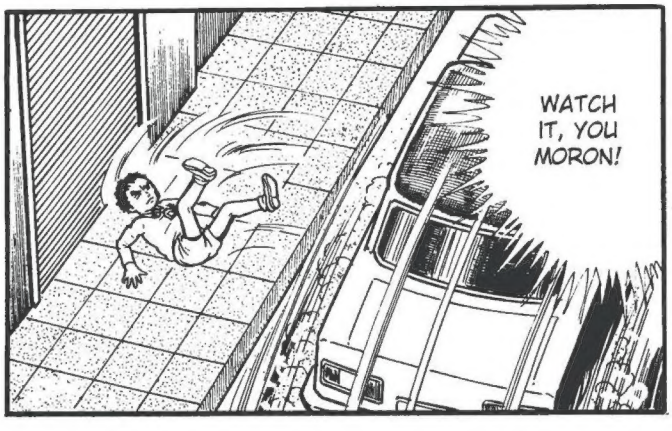


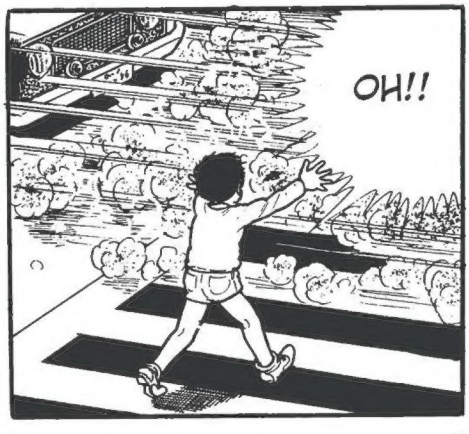
DON'T GO!
STOP!

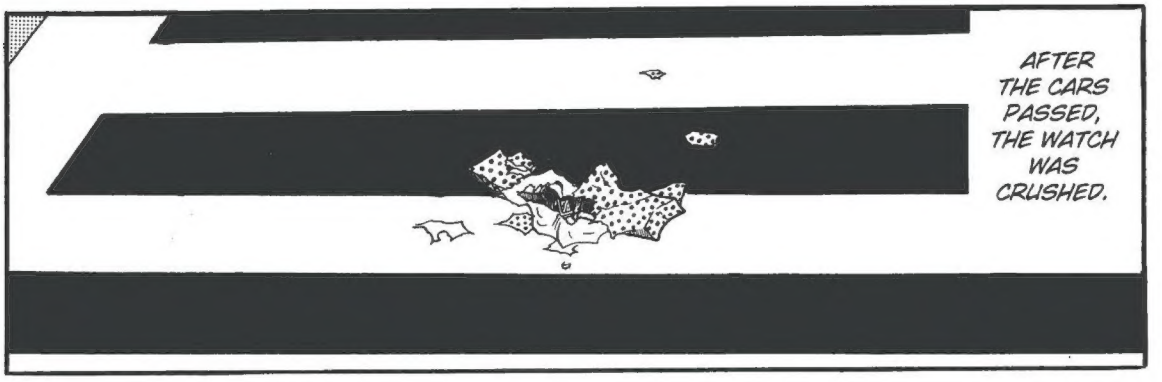

WAIT!

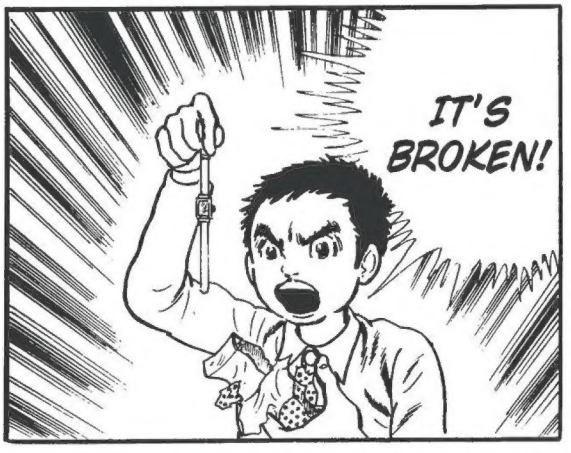
KRAK

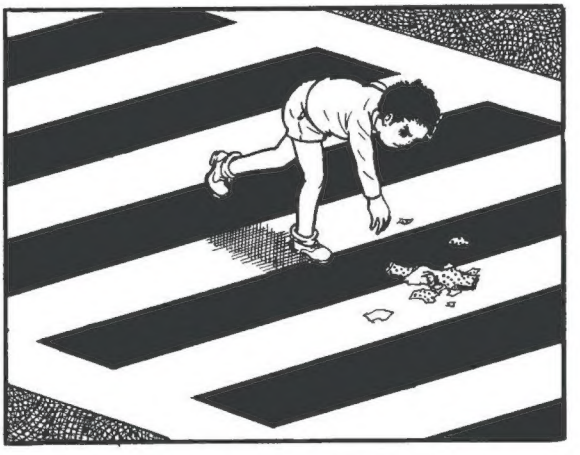
VROOM

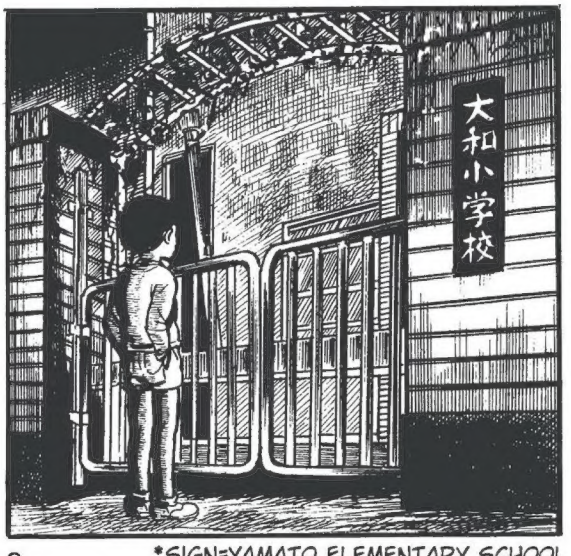

WATCH IT, YOU MORON!


OH!!





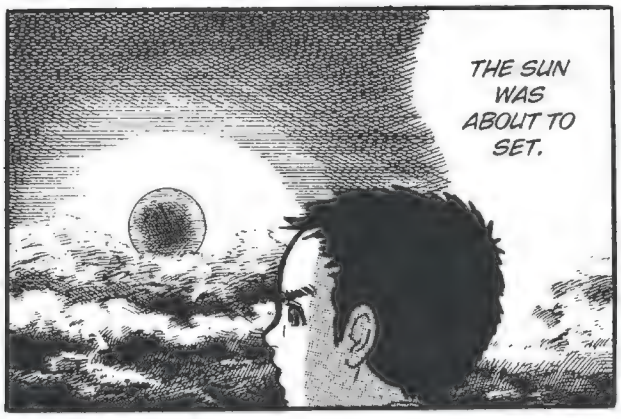


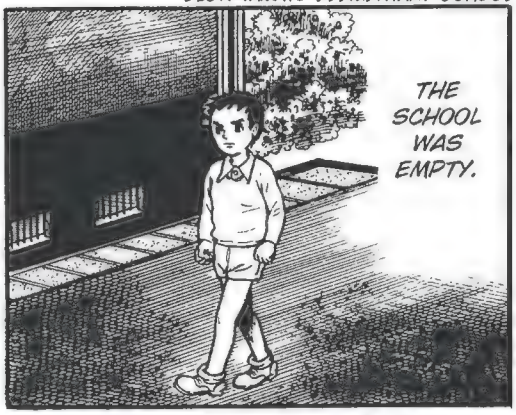


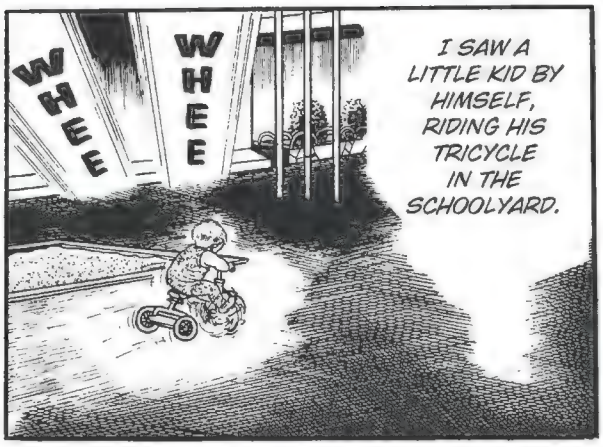
*SIGN=YAMATO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

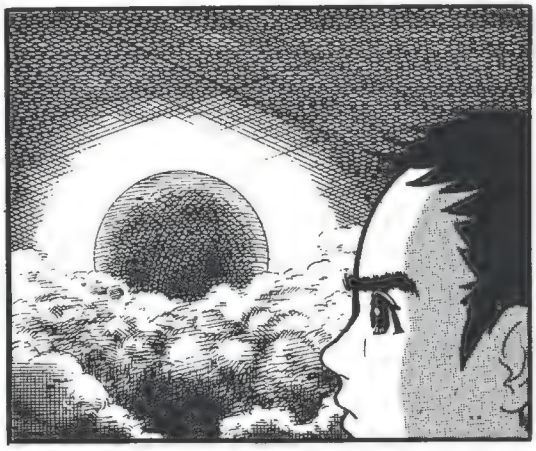
大和小学校

*SIGN=YAMATO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

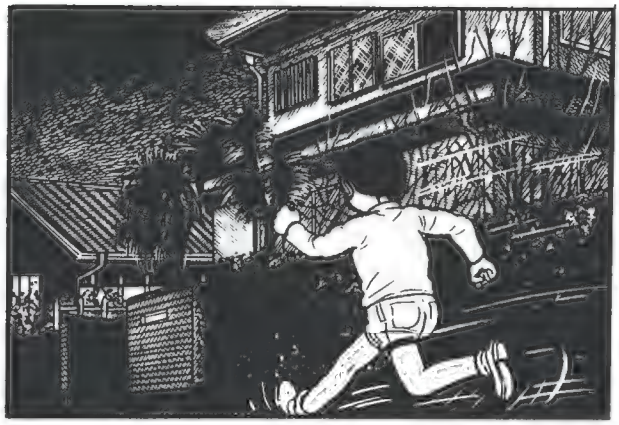


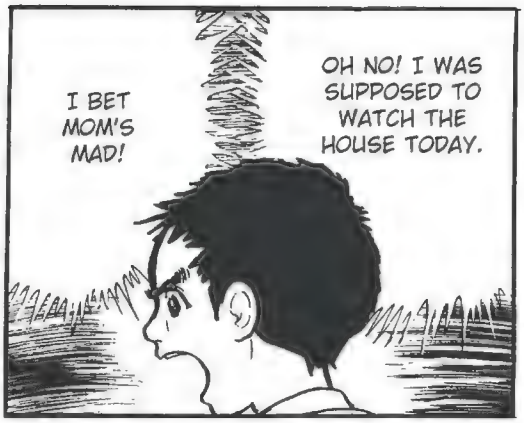






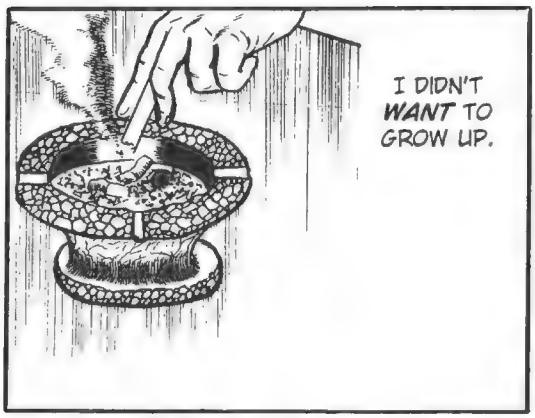
WOW! EEE!
I BET YOU CAN'T DO THIS!
I JOINED HIM, MAKING SANDCASTLES, THEN SWINGING ON THE BARS.
KRASH
WOW !!
LOOK AT THIS! YOU GOT TO BE BRAVE TO DO THIS!
CHECK THIS OUT.
SEE YOU LATER! LET'S PLAY AGAIN SOMETIME!
OVER THERE.
WHERE DO YOU LIVE?
IT WAS DARK BEFORE I KNEW IT.
THAT WAS WHY I CAME HOME LATE.
I'D TOTALLY LOST TRACK OF TIME.



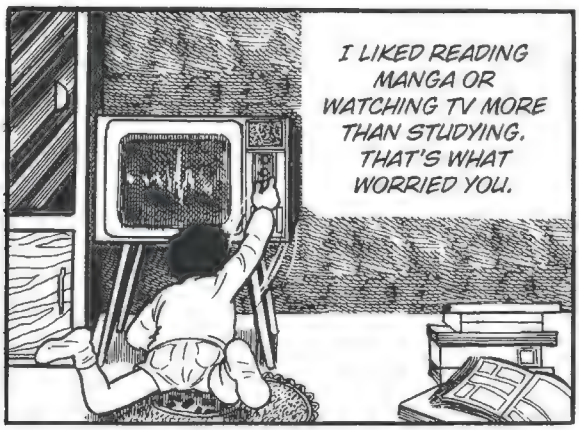

I BET MOM'S MAD!
OH NO! I WAS SUPPOSED TO WATCH THE HOUSE TODAY.

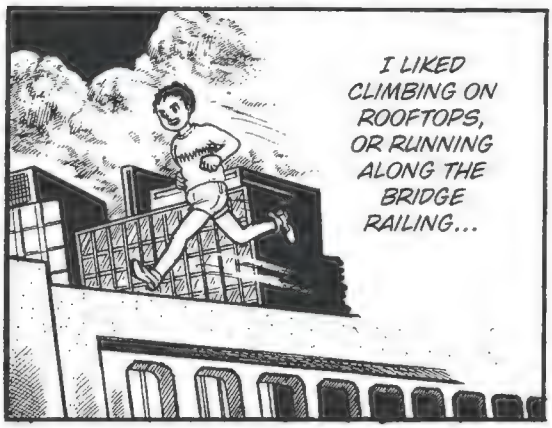
SHO, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? WHY ARE YOU SO LATE!?

I'M HOME!


I DIDN'T WANT TO GROW UP.

LOOK AT YOUR CLOTHES! WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO GROW UP!
LIKE I EXPECTED, SHE WAS UPSET.

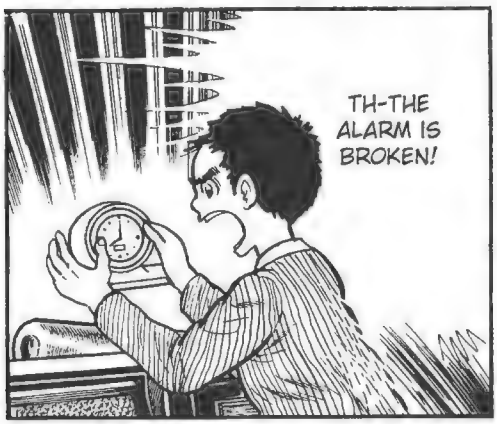

I LIKED READING MANGA OR WATCHING TV MORE THAN STUDYING. THAT'S WHAT WORRIED YOU.

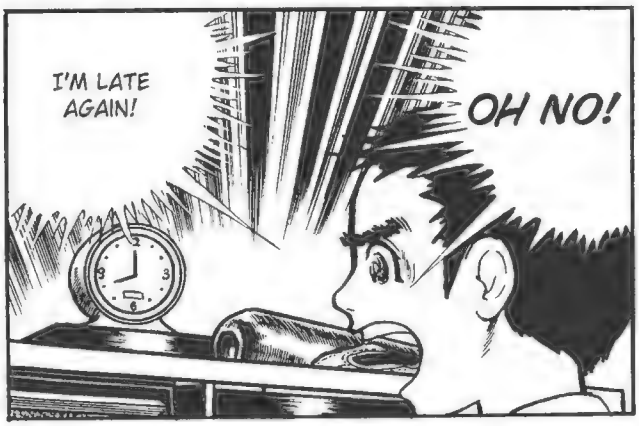

I LIKED CLIMBING ON ROOFTOPS, OR RUNNING ALONG THE BRIDGE RAILING...

I BROUGHT HOME STRAY CATS...
ON TOP OF THAT, I WASN'T GOOD WITH MONEY, SO I ALWAYS ASKED FOR MORE ALLOWANCE.
MOTHER, YOU ALWAYS USED TO SAY, "HOW IN THE WORLD IS HE GOING TO BECOME AN ADULT? HE'S SO IRRESPONSIBLE!"
AIEE
I LIKED TO PULL PRANKS ...
SO YOUR WORRIES ONLY ANNOYED ME.
I MYSELF COULDN'T IMAGINE HOW I COULD GROW UP INTO AN ADULT.
AFTER DINNER, I RAN UP TO MY ROOM.
KLANK
I'M FINISHED!

I TRIED TO STUDY, BUT I WAS IN A BAD MOOD, SO I COULDN'T CONCENTRATE.
TO BE HONEST, I RESENTED YOU FOR IT.
IF I'D BOUGHT THE FUTURE CAR INSTEAD OF YOUR WATCH, IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN CRUSHED BY THE TRAFFIC!
FWAP
IT'S PROBABLY JUST ONE OF MOM'S STUPID STUDY GUIDES!
SO WHEN I FOUND SOMETHING WRAPPED IN MY BACKPACK, I DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER TO OPEN IT.
WHEN I WENT TO BED I FELL ASLEEP ALMOST IMMEDIATELY.

MMHH...


TH-THE ALARM IS BROKEN!

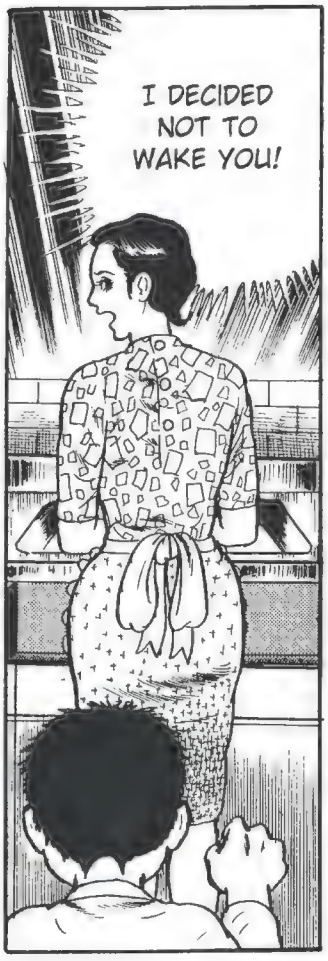

I'M LATE AGAIN!
OH NO!

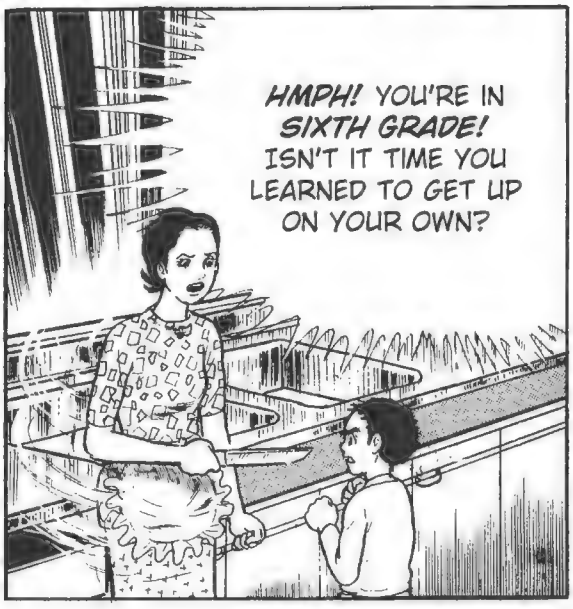
CLUD
MOM!!
TM
TM
CHOP
CHOP
MOM! WHY DIDN'T YOU WAKE ME UP?

CHOP
CHOP

YOU ALWAYS WAKE ME UP! SAY SOMETHING!
HOW COULD YOU DO THIS!!

HOW COULD YOU SLEEP THROUGH THAT ALARM, ANYWAY? I'M STILL REALLY MAD AT YOU, YOU KNOW!


I DECIDED NOT TO WAKE YOU!

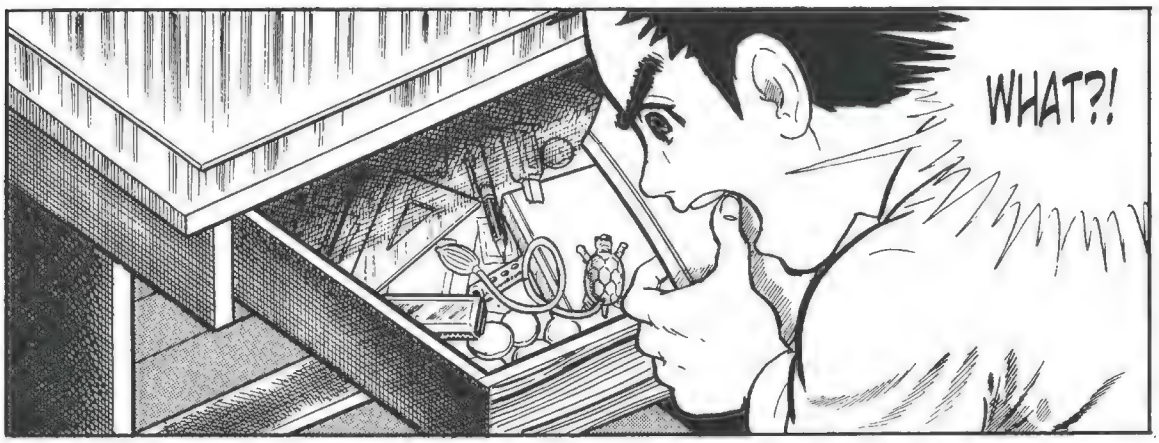

HMPH! YOU'RE IN SIXTH GRADE! ISN'T IT TIME YOU LEARNED TO GET UP ON YOUR OWN?

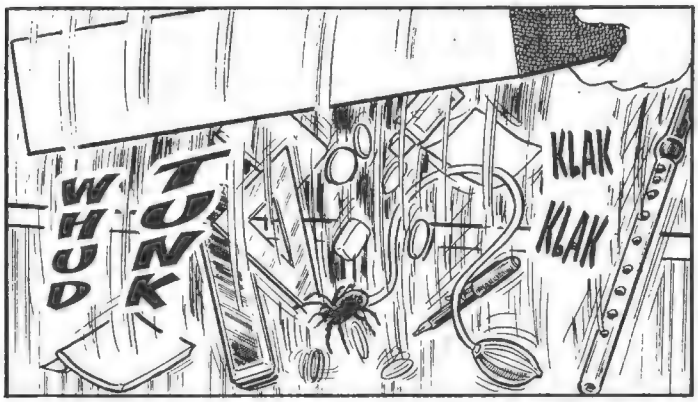
WHAT!! S-SO YOU LET ME SLEEP IN?!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? HURRY UP AND EAT YOUR BREAKFAST AND GO TO SCHOOL! I CAN'T CLEAN UP THE KITCHEN UNTIL YOU LEAVE.
A-ARE YOU GOING TO STAB ME?
WHAT?!
HEY!
KRASH
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO EAT NOW!!
SHO!!
H-HOW DARE YOU?!

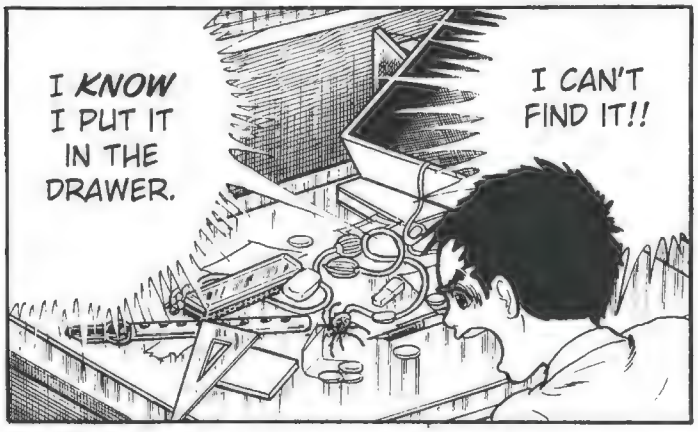
WHERE IS IT...?
OKAY...MATH, JAPANESE, AND...

KLAK


WHAT?!

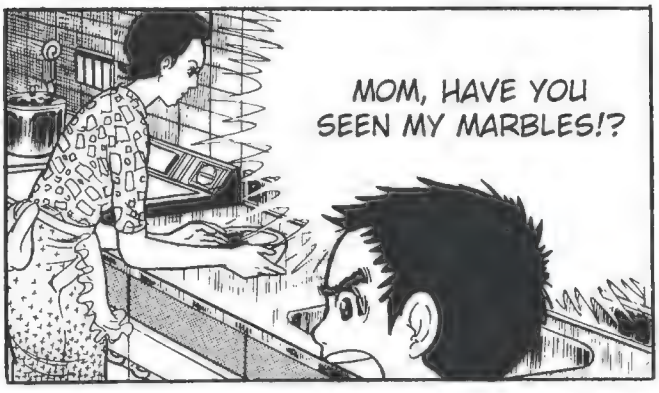

WHUD
TUNK
KLAK
KLAK

IT'S GONE!


I KNOW I PUT IT IN THE DRAWER.
I CAN'T FIND IT!!

HEY, MOM!

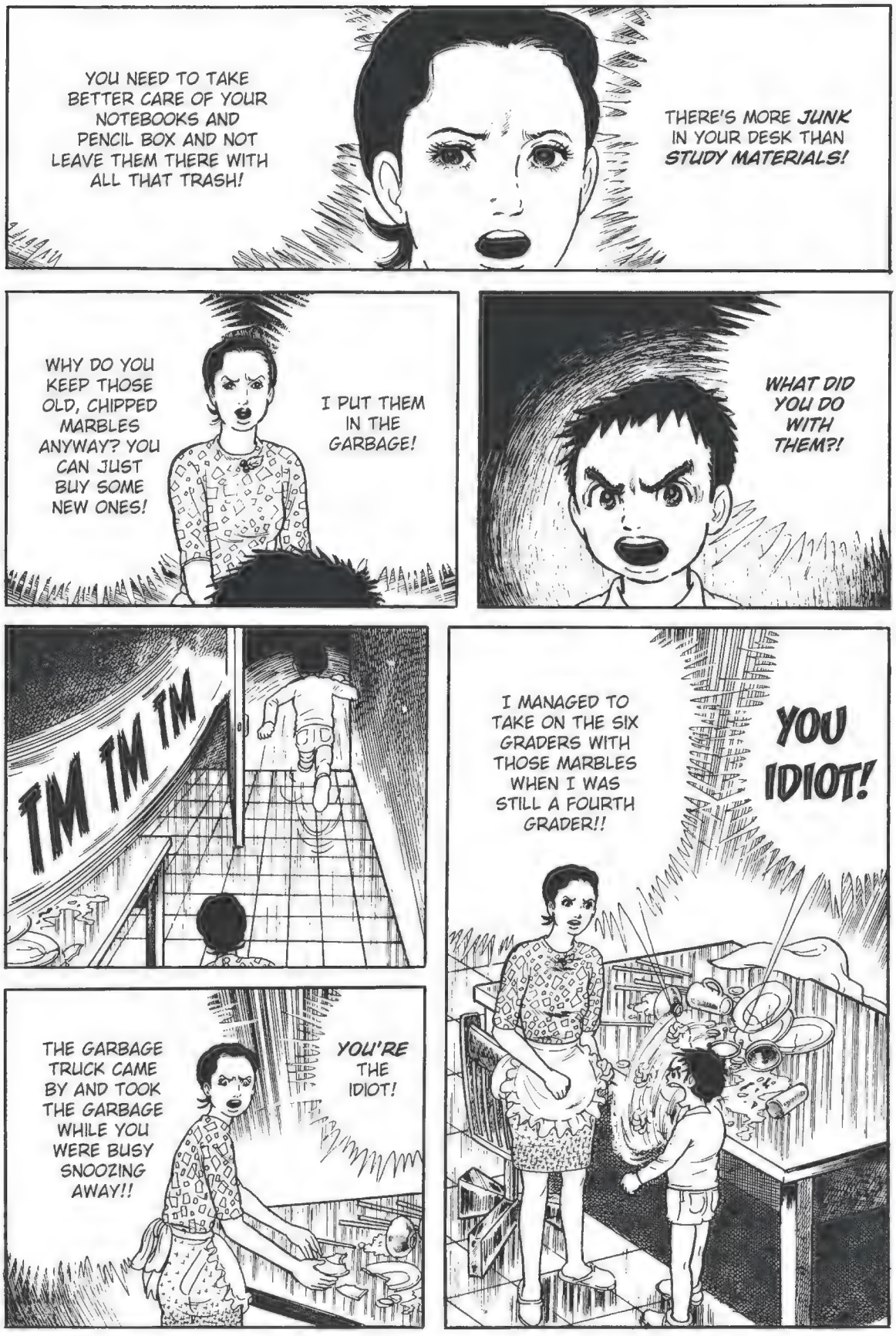
TMTMTM

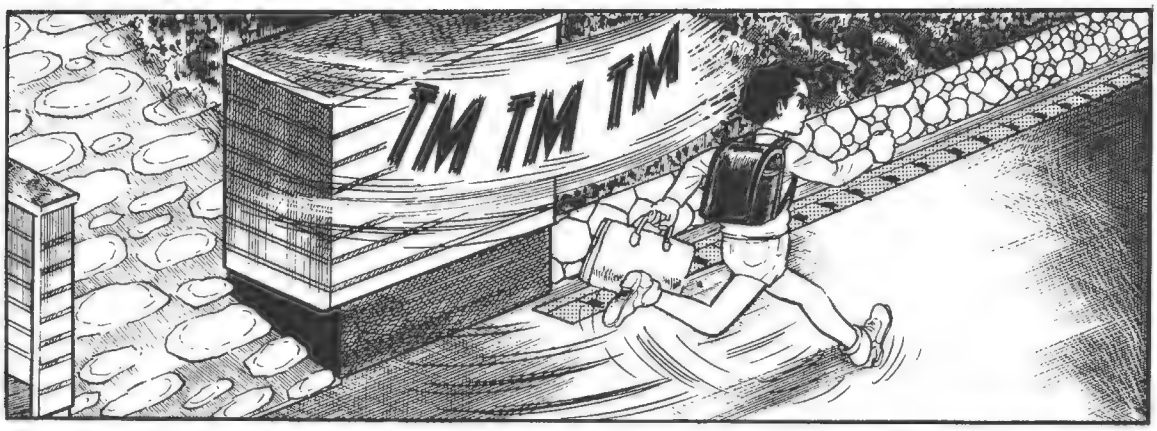

MOM, HAVE YOU SEEN MY MARBLES!?

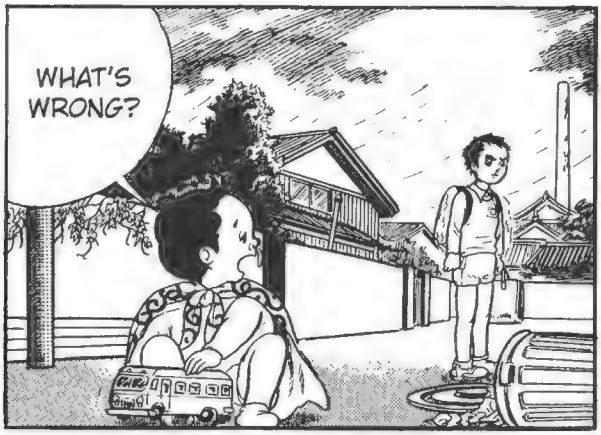
I THREW THEM OUT!!

H-HOW COULD YOU!!

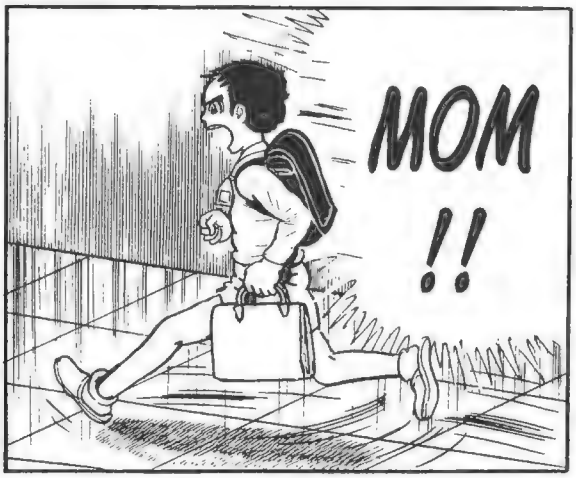
WHAT !?

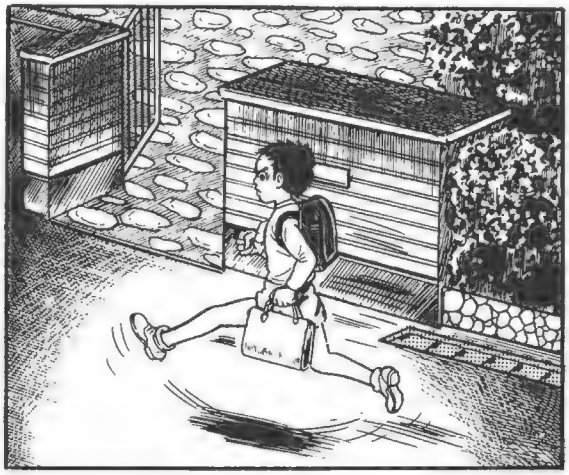

YOU NEED TO TAKE BETTER CARE OF YOUR NOTEBOOKS AND PENCIL BOX AND NOT LEAVE THEM THERE WITH ALL THAT TRASH!
THERE'S MORE JUNK IN YOUR DESK THAN STUDY MATERIALS!
WHY DO YOU KEEP THOSE OLD, CHIPPED MARBLES ANYWAY? YOU CAN JUST BUY SOME NEW ONES!
I PUT THEM IN THE GARBAGE!
WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THEM?!
TM TM TM
I MANAGED TO TAKE ON THE SIX GRADERS WITH THOSE MARBLES WHEN I WAS STILL A FOURTH GRADER!!
YOU IDIOT!
THE GARBAGE TRUCK CAME BY AND TOOK THE GARBAGE WHILE YOU WERE BUSY SNOOZING AWAY!!
YOU'RE THE IDIOT!



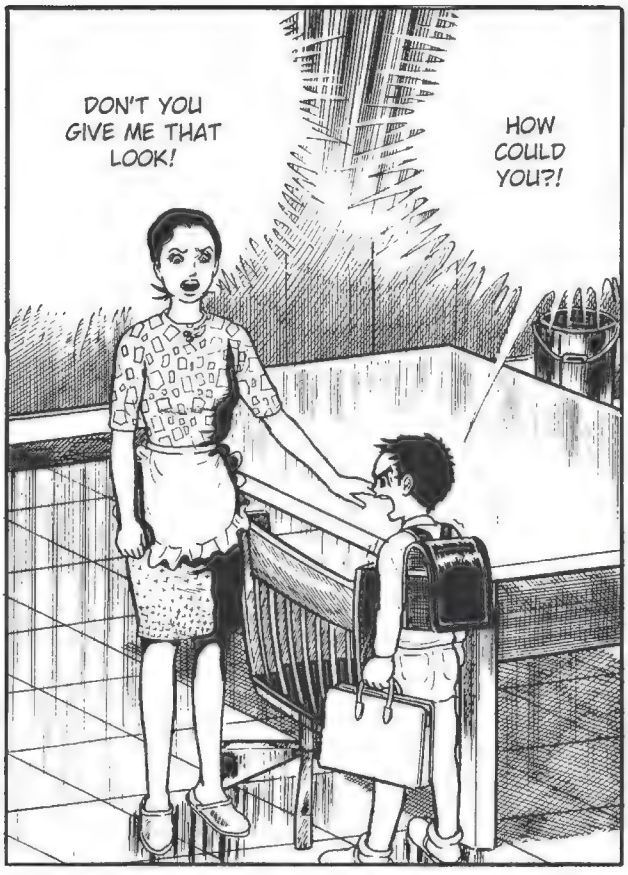


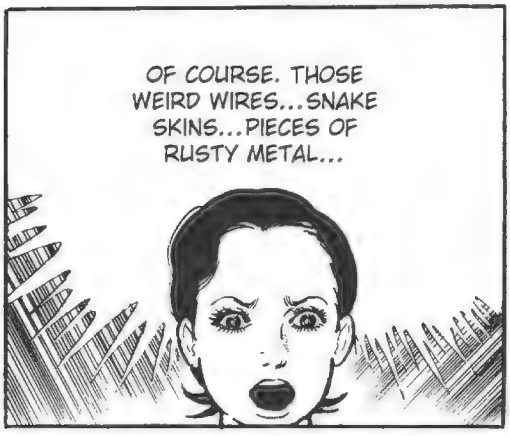
*SIGN=DISPOSE OF GARBAGE HERE





YOU THREW AWAY EVERYTHING, DIDN'T YOU?


DON'T YOU GIVE ME THAT LOOK!
HOW COULD YOU?!


OF COURSE. THOSE WEIRD WIRES...SNAKE SKINS...PIECES OF RUSTY METAL...

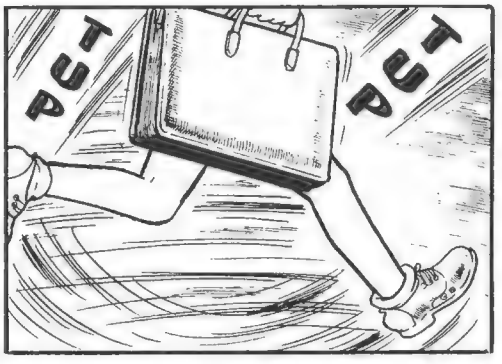
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU *HAD* THAT! DON'T THINK I CAN'T TELL WHAT IT IS!
AND *GUNPOWDER!* DO YOU WANT TO BLOW OFF YOUR FINGERS?

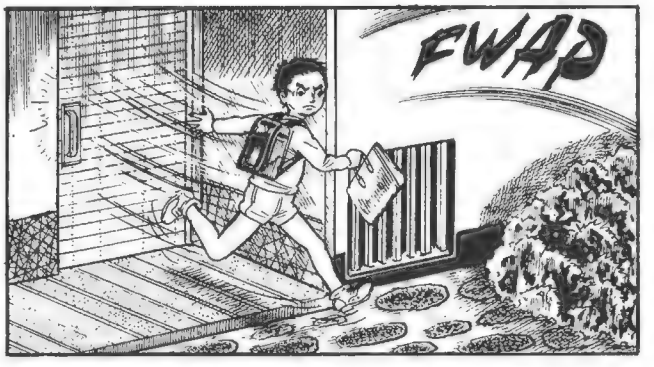
WH-WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
YOU WITCH! I HATE YOU!

WHAT?!
YOU'RE NOT MY MOTHER! YOU HAD NO RIGHT TO GO THROUGH MY DESK!
HOW DARE YOU TALK TO YOUR MOTHER LIKE THAT?
YOU'RE NOT MY MOM AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED!!
OH YEAH? WELL, YOU'RE NO SON OF MINE!!
SLAM

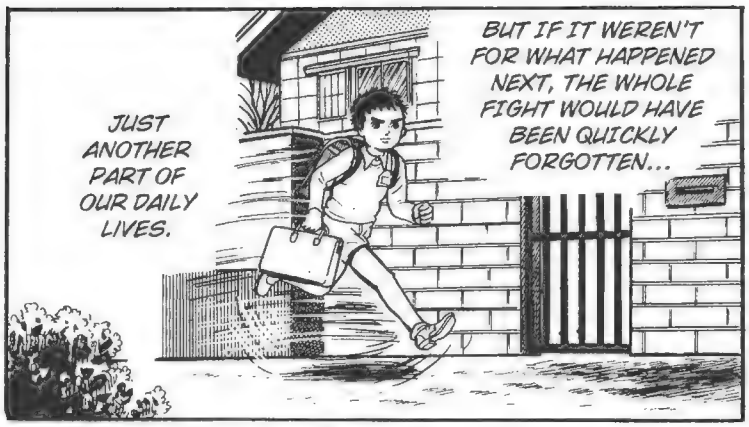
I'M NEVER COMING HOME!!

I HOPE YOU NEVER COME BACK!!
FINE BY ME!!


PET
PET


FWAP

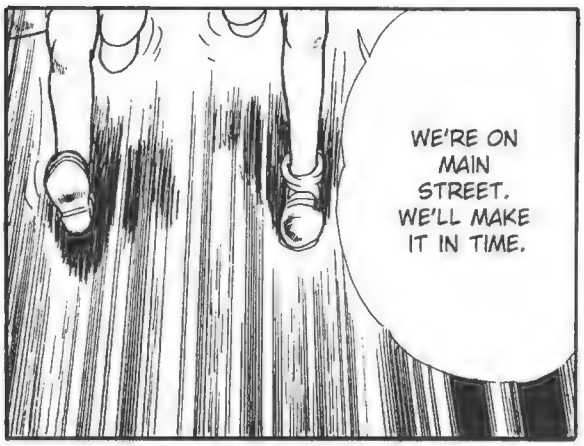
I TOSSED OUT THE PACKAGE IN MY BACKPACK WITHOUT EVEN CHECKING TO SEE WHAT IT WAS.

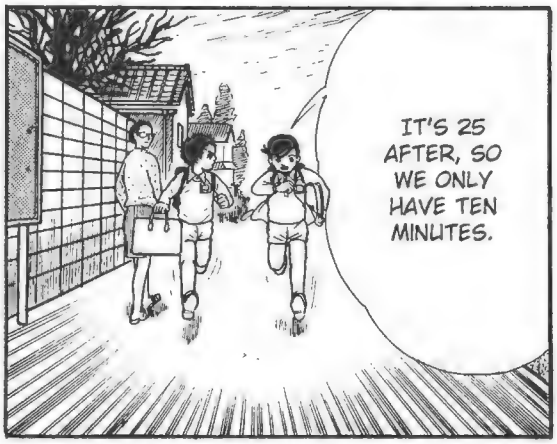

JUST ANOTHER PART OF OUR DAILY LIVES.
BUT IF IT WEREN'T FOR WHAT HAPPENED NEXT, THE WHOLE FIGHT WOULD HAVE BEEN QUICKLY FORGOTTEN...

I WENT TO YOUR HOUSE, BUT YOUR MOM SAID YOU LEFT ALREADY.
HEY, SHINICHI!!

HEY, SHO!!

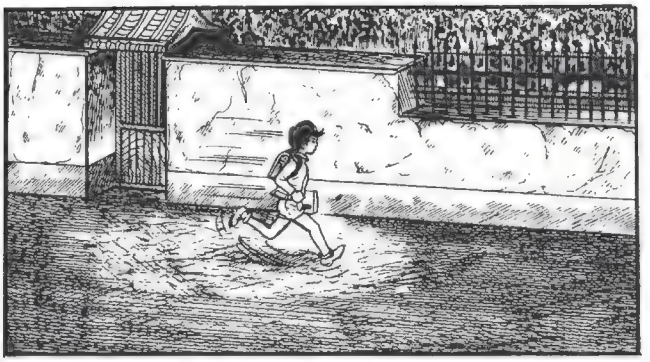
WE BETTER GET GOING OR WE'LL BE LATE.

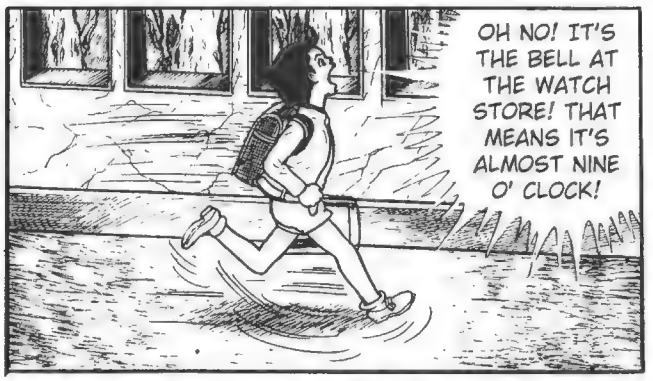

WE'RE ON MAIN STREET. WE'LL MAKE IT IN TIME.

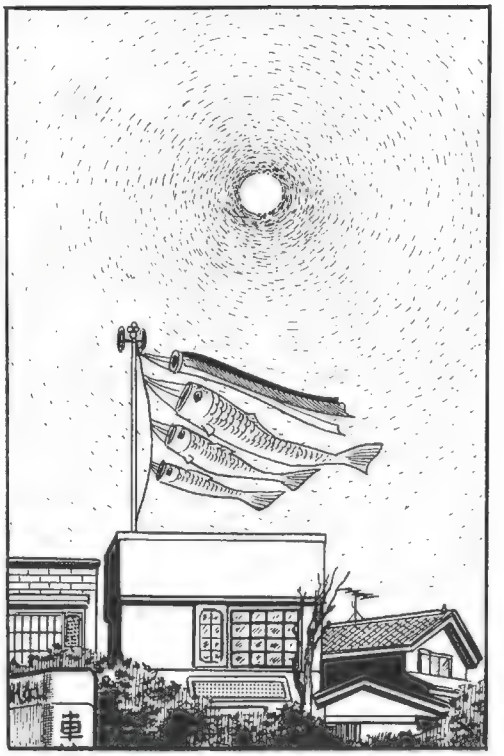

IT'S 25 AFTER, SO WE ONLY HAVE TEN MINUTES.

WHAT!?
OH NO!!
HUH!? UM... YEAH...
DID YOU GET THE FUTURE CAR?
WHAT SHOULD WE DO? SHOULD WE GO BACK AND GET IT?
ME TOO!
OH NO!!
I FORGOT MY LUNCH MONEY!
ME TOO!
WE BOTH EAT A LOT SO I FEEL BAD THAT WE DIDN'T BRING IT.
THERE'S TEN MINUTES BETWEEN MORNING ASSEMBLY AND CLASS. WE MIGHT STILL BE ABLE TO MAKE IT TO CLASS ON TIME!
LET'S GO BACK AND GET IT!
BUT WE'RE ALMOST THERE.

I JUST DON'T... I DON'T EVER WANT TO GO BACK THERE EVER AGAIN!!
WHY NOT?
YOU GO BACK. I DON'T WANT TO GO HOME FOR LUNCH MONEY.
IF I'M NOT BACK IN TIME, TELL THE TEACHER WHY I'M LATE, OKAY?
SEE YOU!
I'LL SEE YOU AT SCHOOL!
ALL RIGHT, BUT I'M GOING BACK.
とまれ
HE SEEMED KIND OF SAD. BUT THAT'S NOT LIKE HIM.
I WONDER WHY HE DOESN'T WANT TO GO HOME.




OH NO! IT'S THE BELL AT THE WATCH STORE! THAT MEANS IT'S ALMOST NINE O' CLOCK!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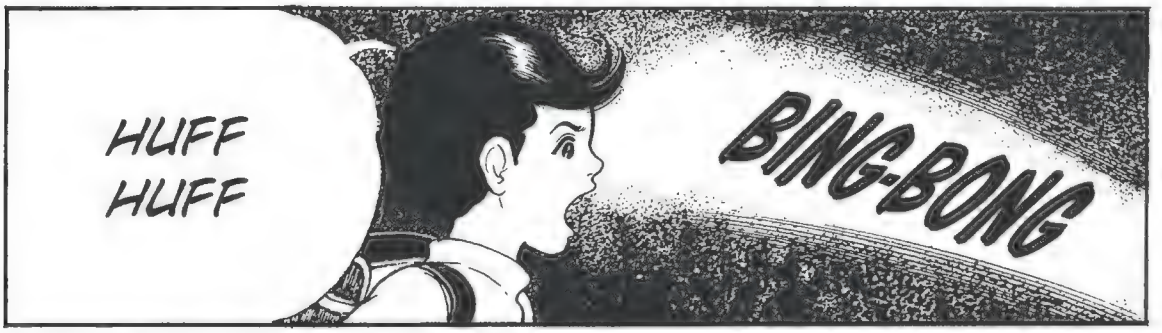
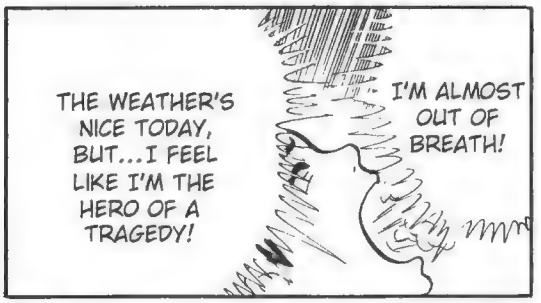
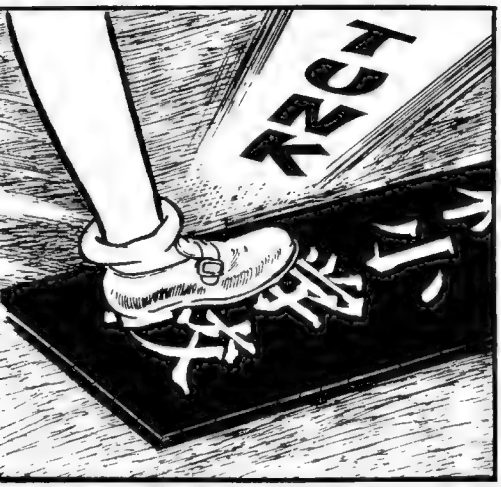

HUFF HUFF
BING-BONG


THE WEATHER'S NICE TODAY, BUT...I FEEL LIKE I'M THE HERO OF A TRAGEDY!
I'M ALMOST OUT OF BREATH!

....MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE GONE WITH SHO.
I GOT MY LUNCH MONEY, BUT...

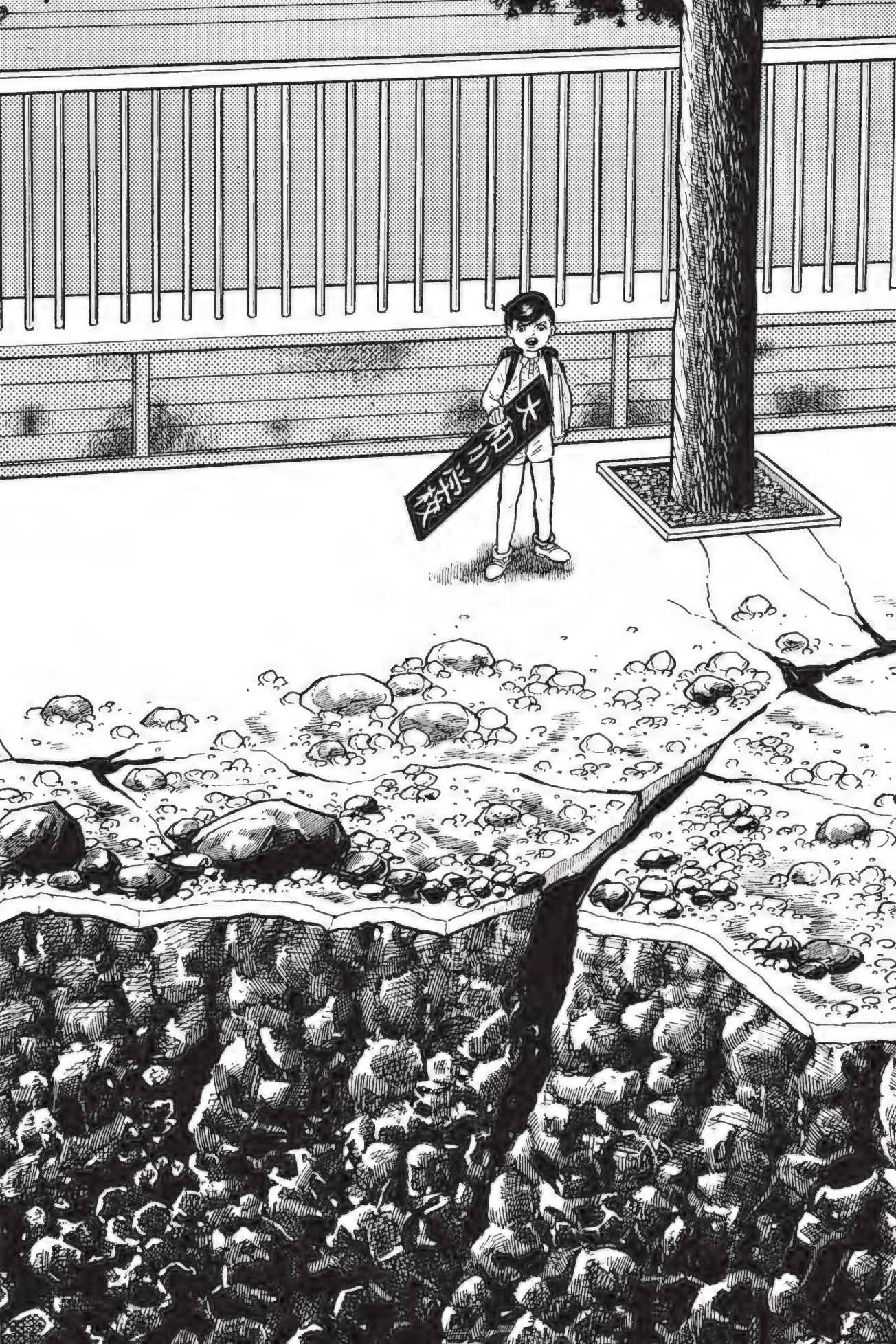
喫茶店
プリンス

WHUD
WAAHH!
SKRASH
ケット
EEYAAA!
I-IT SOUNDED LIKE IT CAME FROM THE SCHOOL...!
WH-WHAT WAS THAT SOUND...?



*SIGN=YAMATO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

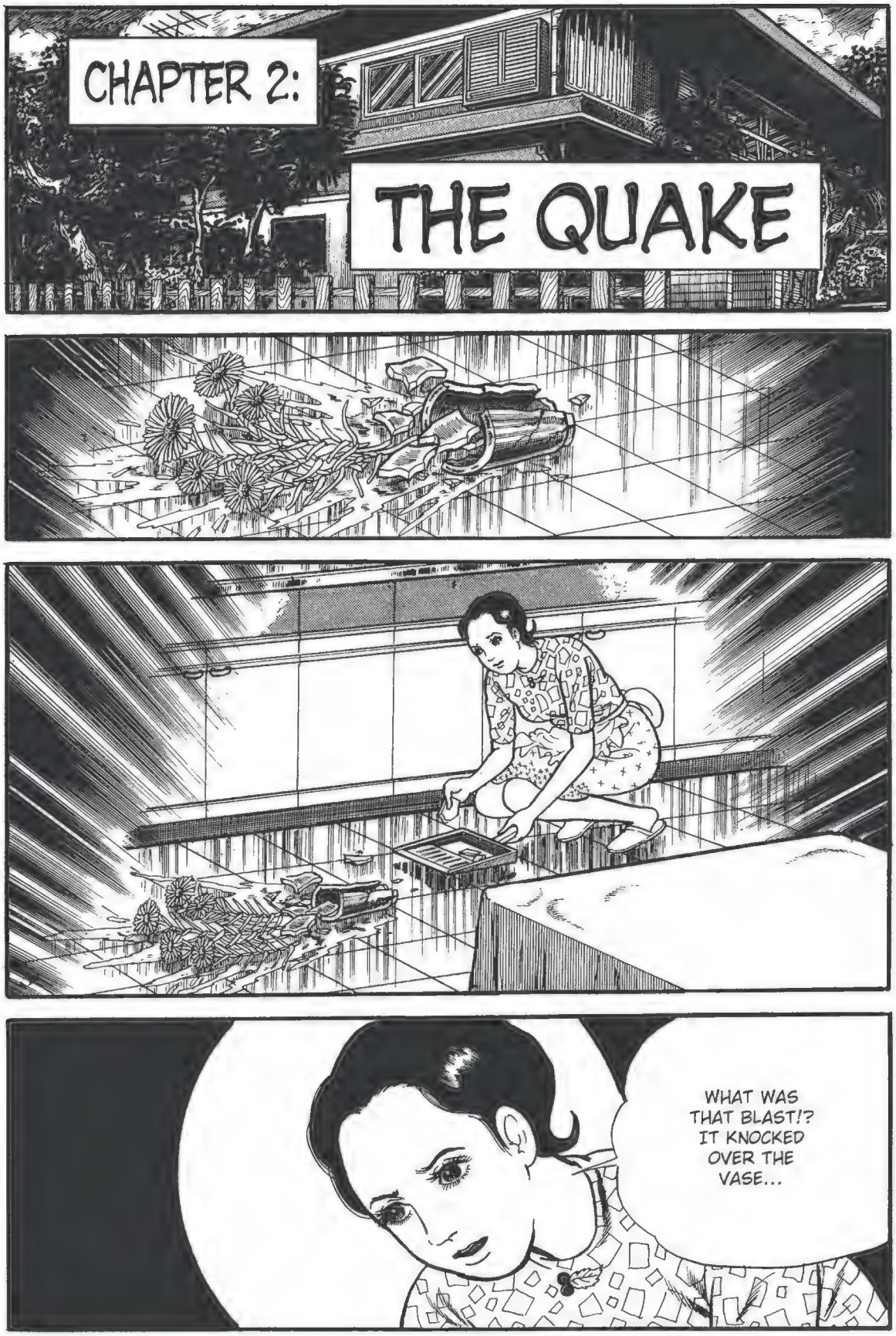
森怪三吉丸


禁例三名大

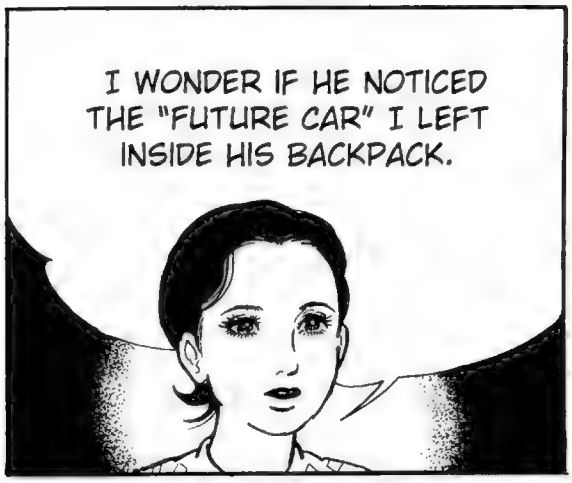
THE SCHOOL'S GONE!!
大和小学
大和

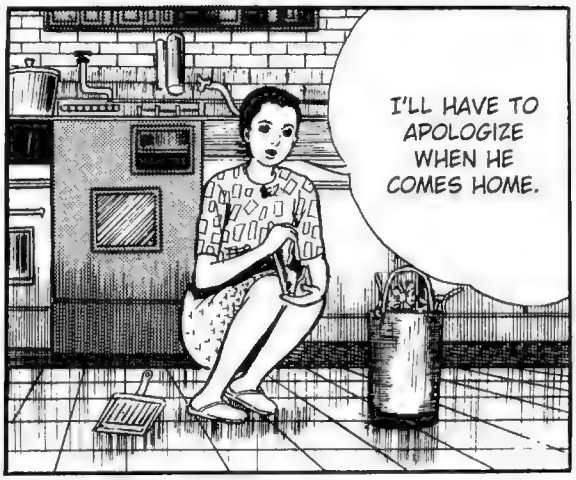
森林学者

KAAGGH
森林学者

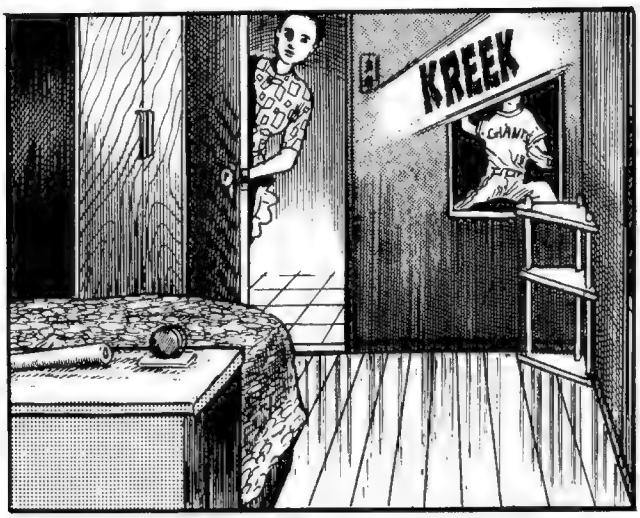

CHAPTER 2:
THE QUAKE
WHAT WAS THAT BLAST!? IT KNOCKED OVER THE VASE...

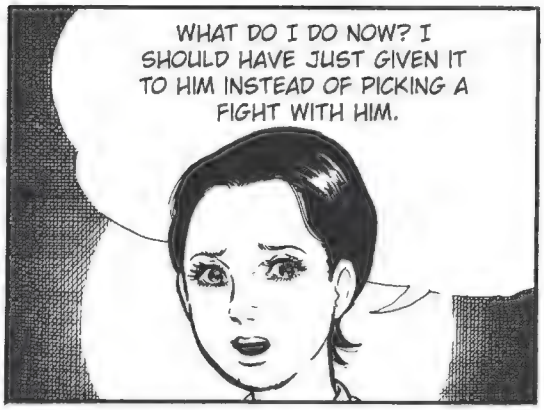
I CAN'T BELIEVE I TOLD HIM NOT TO COME BACK.
MAYBE I WAS A LITTLE TOO HARSH WITH SHO.


I WONDER IF HE NOTICED THE "FUTURE CAR" I LEFT INSIDE HIS BACKPACK.


I'LL HAVE TO APOLOGIZE WHEN HE COMES HOME.

I'D BETTER CHECK.
IT WOULD BE AWFUL IF HE TOOK IT TO SCHOOL WITHOUT NOTICING IT.


KREEK

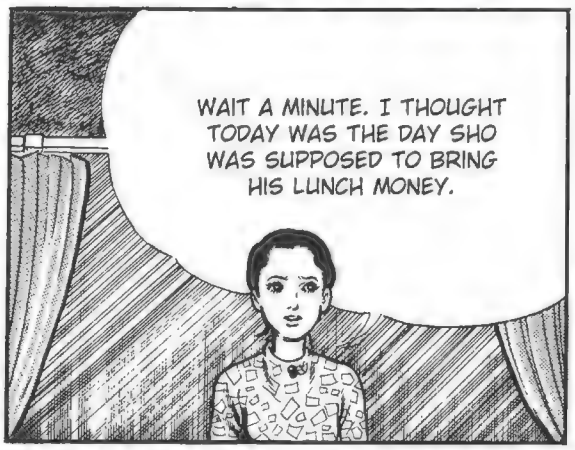

WHAT DO I DO NOW? I SHOULD HAVE JUST GIVEN IT TO HIM INSTEAD OF PICKING A FIGHT WITH HIM.

SO HE TOOK IT TO SCHOOL...
IT'S NOT HERE!!

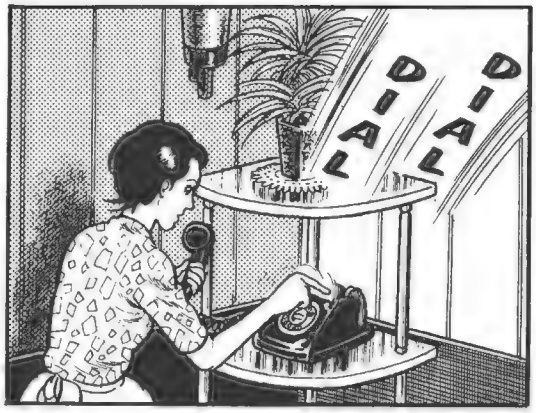
...WHAT'S GOING ON OUTSIDE?

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?

I'D BETTER CALL THE SCHOOL.


WAIT A MINUTE. I THOUGHT TODAY WAS THE DAY SHO WAS SUPPOSED TO BRING HIS LUNCH MONEY.

THERE'S NO TONE.
IS THE LINE BUSY...? THAT'S ODD...


DIAL
DIAL

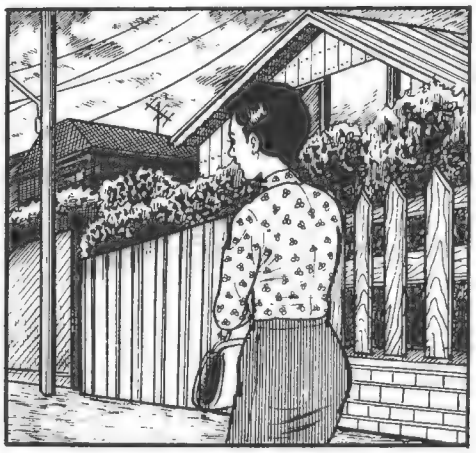
DING

IS OUR PHONE BROKEN?
NO ONE'S ANSWERING.

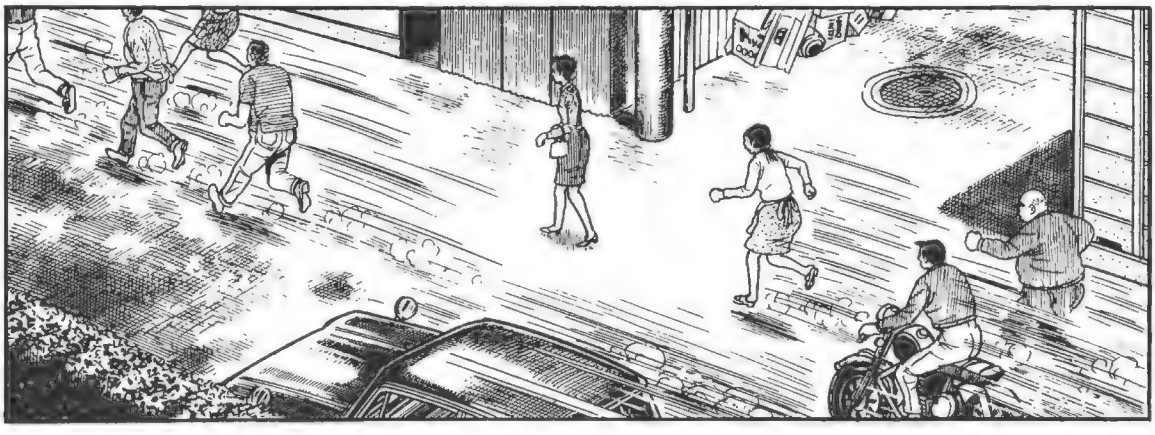
DIAL
DIAL
BETTER TRY AGAIN.

I'LL BRING THE LUNCH MONEY MYSELF.

EEE
WAA

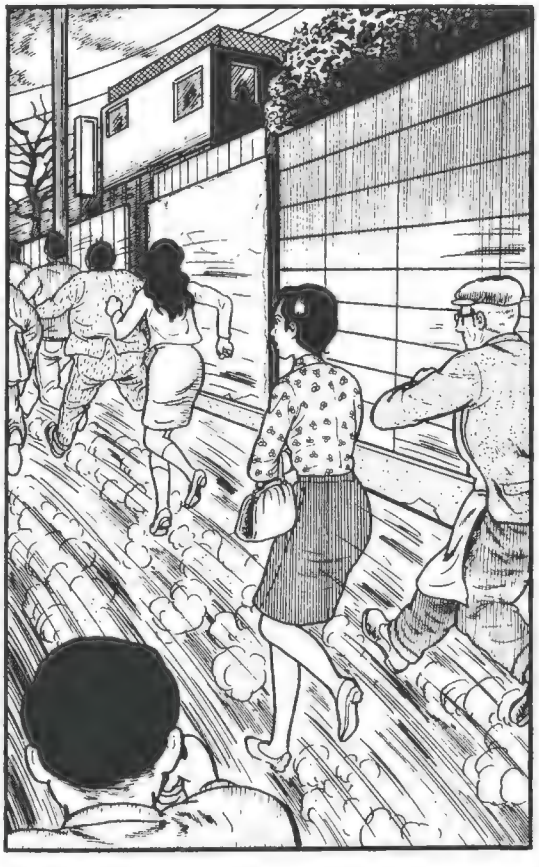


WHAT'S GOING ON?!



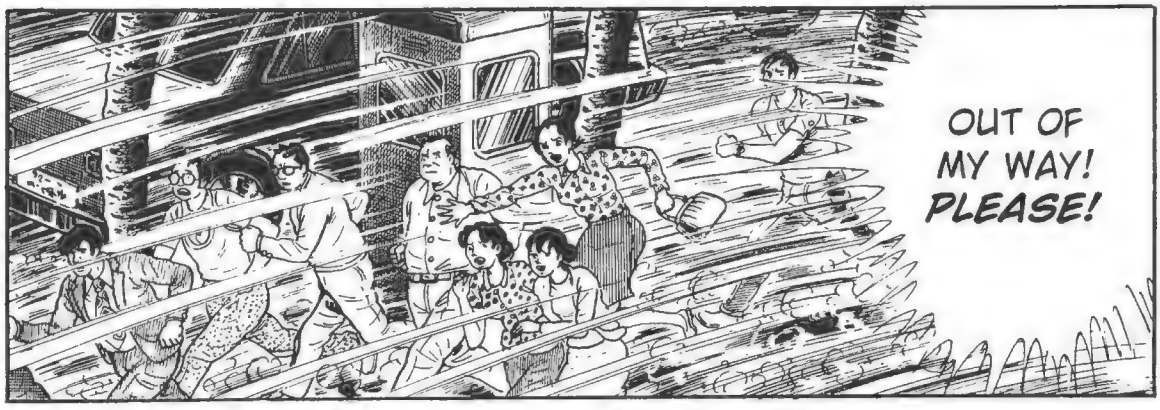
D-DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON?

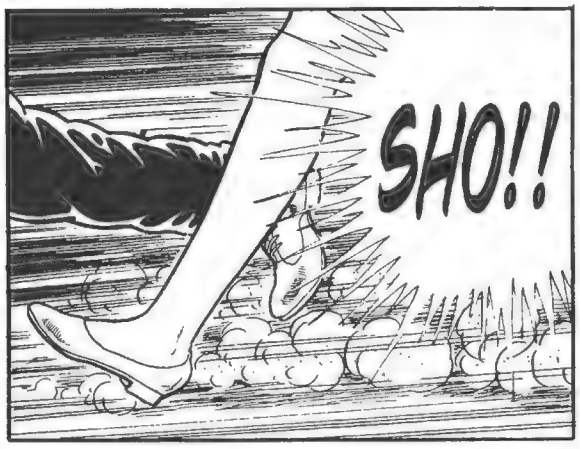
WHAT !?
APPARENTLY THERE'S BEEN A GAS EXPLOSION AT THE SCHOOL!!



Y-YOU DON'T MEAN YAMATO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?! MY SON GOES THERE!
A G-GAS EXPLOSION ?!

I DON'T KNOW THE DETAILS... THAT'S JUST WHAT I HEARD...


OUT OF MY WAY! PLEASE!


SHO!!

SHO!!

WREEE
WREEE

THE STUDENTS ARE SEVERELY INJURED!! THERE'S BLOOD EVERYWHERE!
THERE'S BEEN AN EXPLOSION AT YAMATO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL!!

OH GOD! SHINICHI!

HUFF HUFF

YOU WENT TO SCHOOL WITH HIM, RIGHT!?
SHINICHI! WHERE'S SHO?!
SH-SHINICHI!
THIS FELL ON THE GROUND!
WH-WHAT'S THIS?
E-EVERYONE'S GONE!!
I SHOULD HAVE MADE HIM COME WITH ME!!
SHO !!
SHINICHI, PLEASE! A-ARE YOU ALL RIGHT!?
WH-WHAT!? WHAT DO YOU MEAN THEY'RE GONE!?

AHH!
AIEEE!
SHO!!

LET ME THROUGH !!
LET ME SEE!!

WHERE'S SHO!?

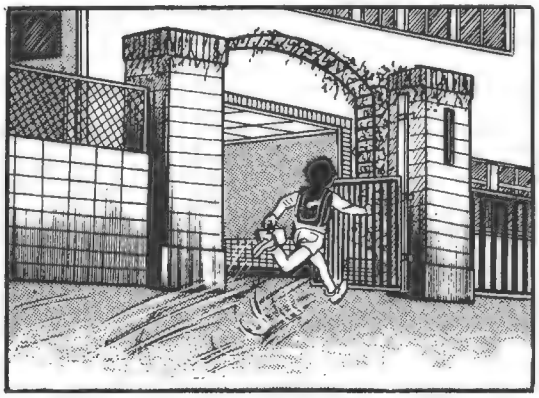
AAH
AIEE

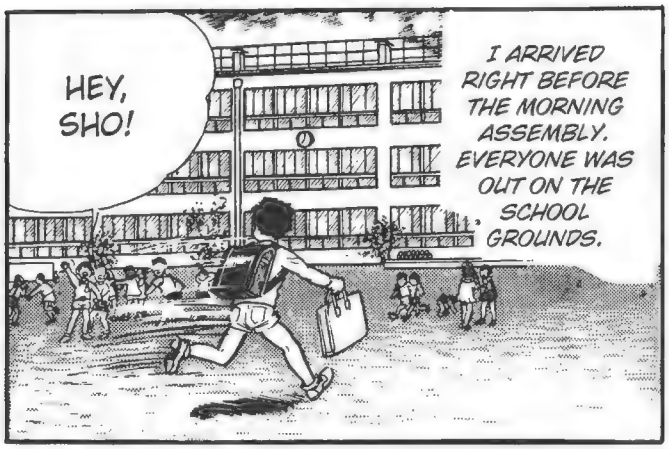
AHH

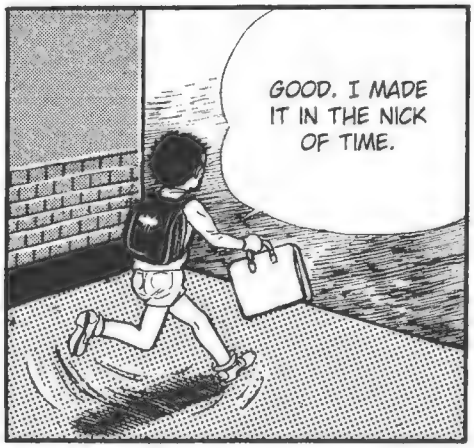
UH-HUH! IF I'M NOT BACK IN TIME, TELL THE TEACHER WHY I'M LATE, OKAY?
SEE YOU LATER!

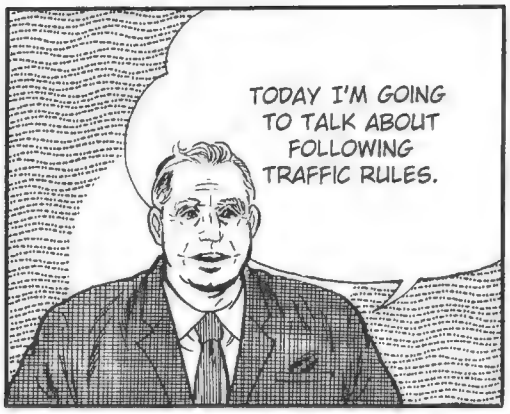
WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED AFTER I LEFT SHINICHI, MOTHER?

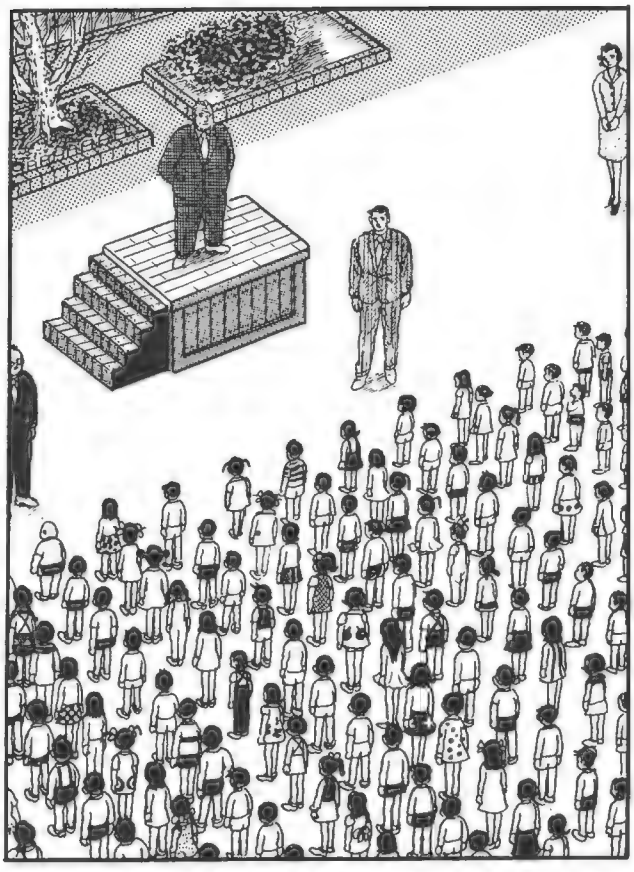
とまれ



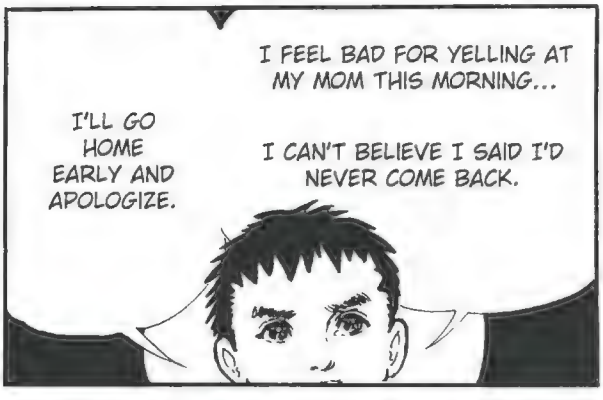

HEY, SHO!
I ARRIVED RIGHT BEFORE THE MORNING ASSEMBLY. EVERYONE WAS OUT ON THE SCHOOL GROUNDS.

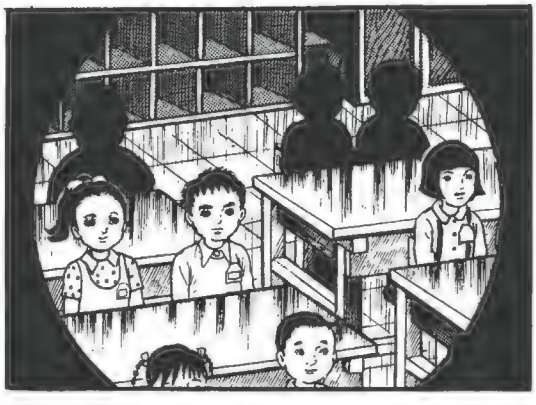

GOOD. I MADE IT IN THE NICK OF TIME.


TODAY I'M GOING TO TALK ABOUT FOLLOWING TRAFFIC RULES.

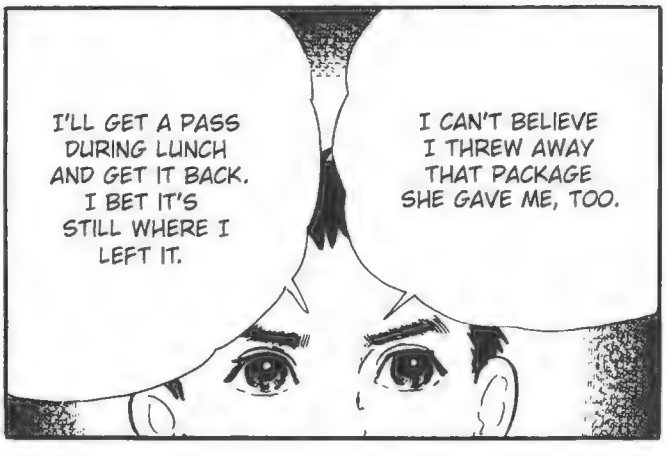


AFTER THE ASSEMBLY WE MARCHED INTO OUR CLASSROOM.


I FEEL BAD FOR YELLING AT MY MOM THIS MORNING...
I'LL GO HOME EARLY AND APOLOGIZE.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I SAID I'D NEVER COME BACK.

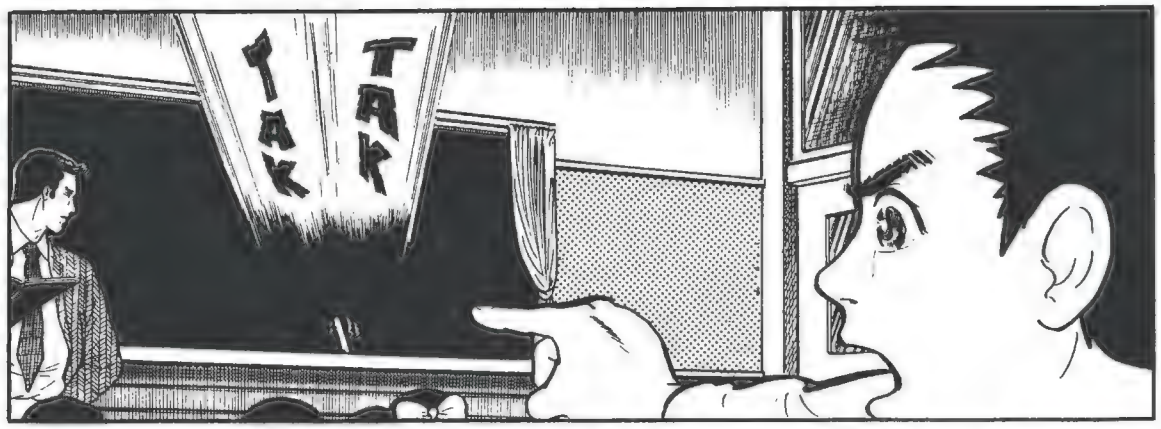


TIME TO TAKE ATTENDANCE.


I'LL GET A PASS DURING LUNCH AND GET IT BACK. I BET IT'S STILL WHERE I LEFT IT.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I THREW AWAY THAT PACKAGE SHE GAVE ME, TOO.

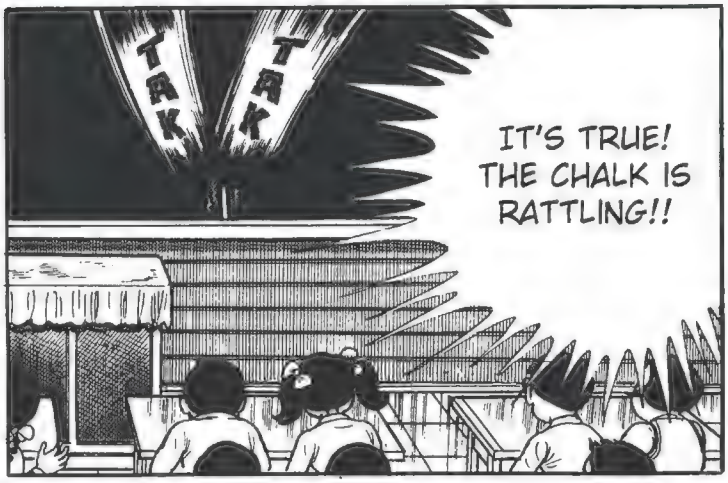
WHEW! SHO SHOULD'VE COME WITH ME INSTEAD OF GOING BACK TO GET HIS LUNCH MONEY.
NOT TOO MANY OF YOU... WELL, DON'T FORGET IT TOMORROW.
RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU BROUGHT YOUR LUNCH MONEY.
SHO DID IT!
WHOSE STOMACH GROWLED THE MOMENT I MENTIONED LUNCH?
GRUMBLE
HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA
I HOPE I LAST UNTIL LUNCH.
SORRY...I FORGOT TO EAT BREAKFAST.
HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA

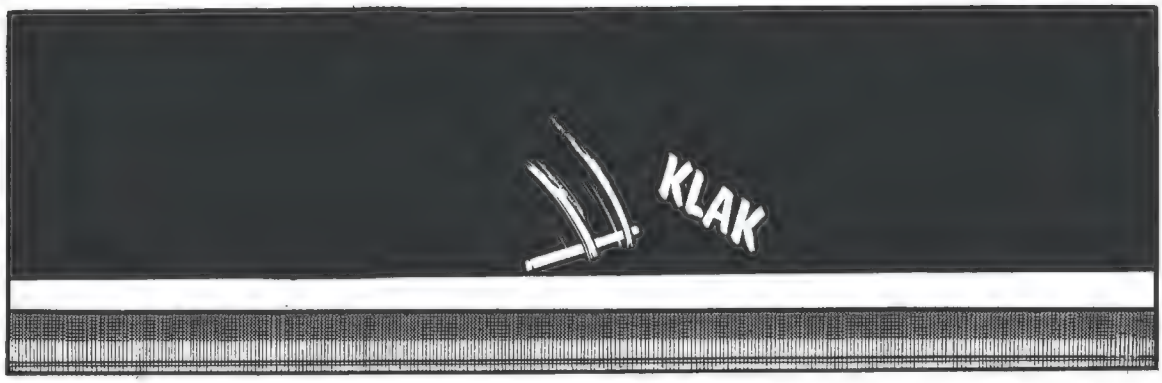
HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA
CHUDO
HEY!
WHAT!?
THE BUILDING IS SHAKING!

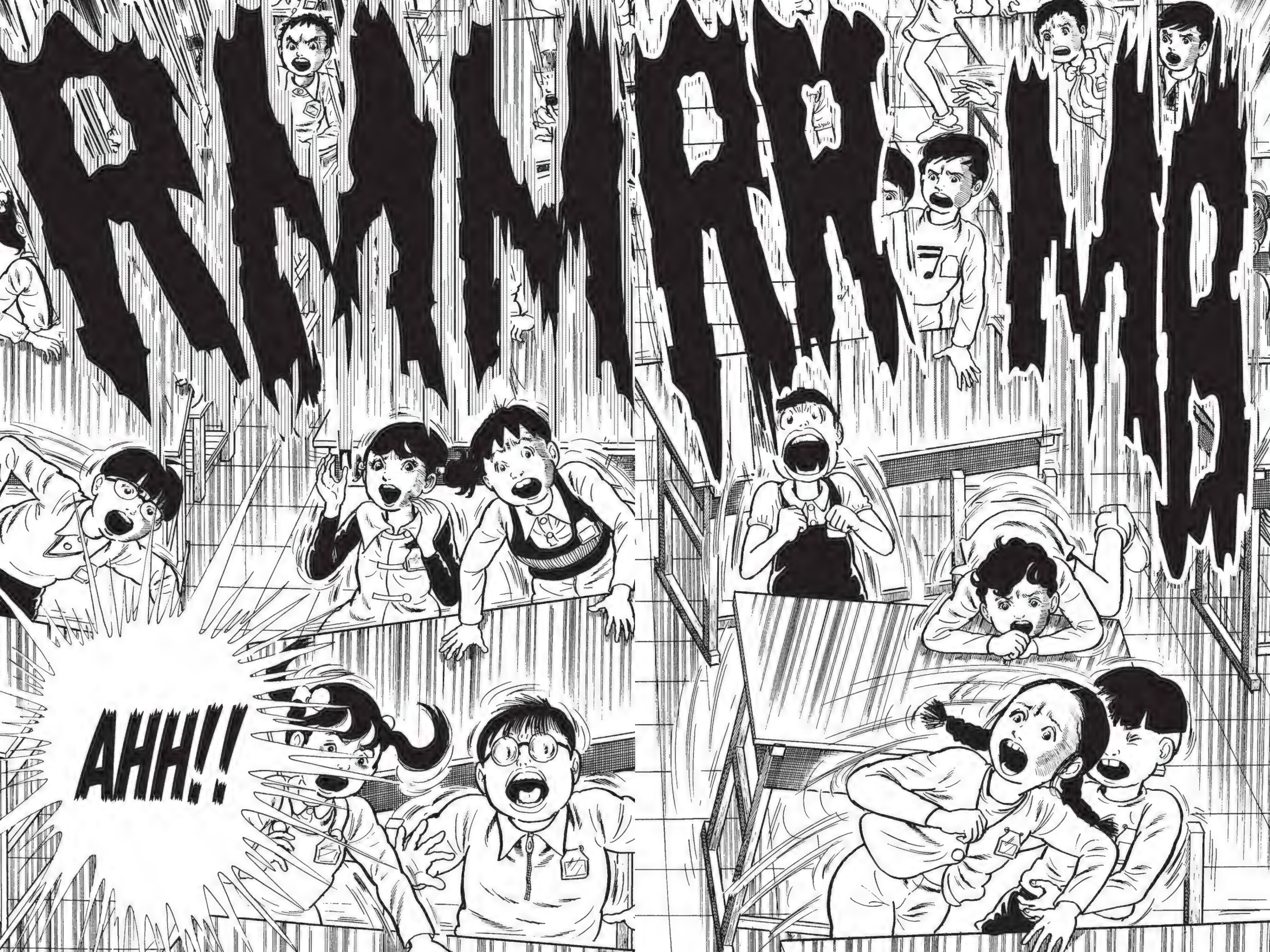

TAK
TAK

TAK
TAK
TAK

CALM DOWN, EVERYBODY. BE QUIET!!


TAK
TAK
IT'S TRUE! THE CHALK IS RATTLING!!

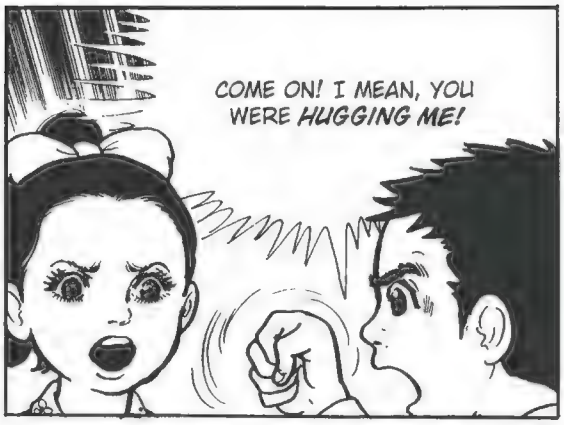

KLAK


AHH!!

THIS MUST BE THE GREAT TOKYO EARTH-QUAKE!!
IT'S HUGE!
AGGH!
GET UNDER YOUR DESKS!!
CALM DOWN!!
GYAA

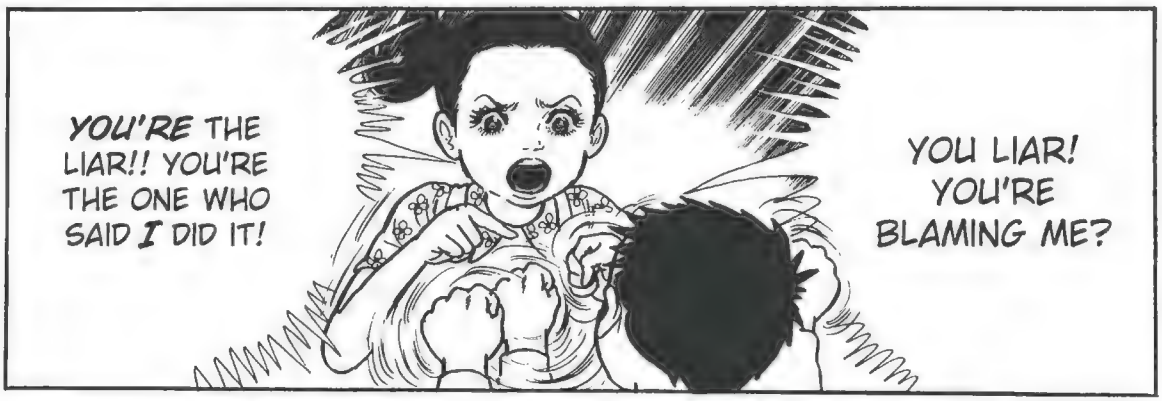
KRRRRR
I'M SCARED !!
EEYAAA !!

IT'S BEEN AT LEAST THREE MINUTES... IT SHOULD BE SAFE TO COME OUT!
IT'S OVER!!
HEY, SAKI, IT'S OVER. LET GO!!
AH!!
AH!!
TUMP
I SAID, LET GO OF ME, YOU SISSY!!
AIEE!
THUD
OW, MY HEAD!
WHUDD


COME ON! I MEAN, YOU WERE HUGGING ME!

WHAT WAS THAT FOR?!

OH, GIVE ME A BREAK! YOU WERE THE ONE HUGGING ME!!


YOU'RE THE LIAR!! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID I DID IT!
YOU LIAR! YOU'RE BLAMING ME?

THAT MUST HAVE BEEN AT LEAST A FIVE ON THE RICHTER SCALE!
WOW, THAT WAS SCARY!!

BE QUIET!!
ALL RIGHT, THAT'S ENOUGH!

YOU DUCKED UNDER THE DESK BEFORE HE EVEN TOLD US TO!
STUPID! GIVE ME A BREAK!!
BUT WE'RE ALL FINE! IT WASN'T A BIG DEAL!
HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA
THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANY DAMAGE...
WELL, I THINK WE CAN CONTINUE CLASS NOW.

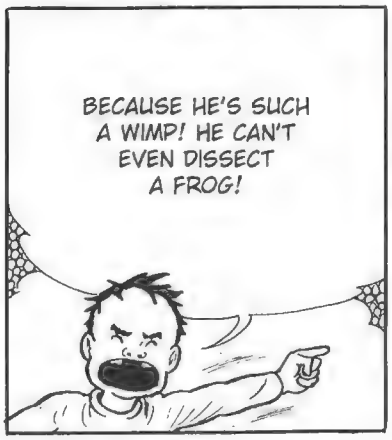
NOW... FIRST PERIOD IS SOCIAL STUDIES.

LISTEN UP...IF YOU'RE EVER IN A REAL EMERGENCY, DON'T PANIC. YOU HAVE TO THINK STRAIGHT.

I'LL START OFF WITH A QUESTION. WHAT DO YOU IMAGINE THE FUTURE WOULD BE LIKE?

I WANT TO BE A DOCTOR.

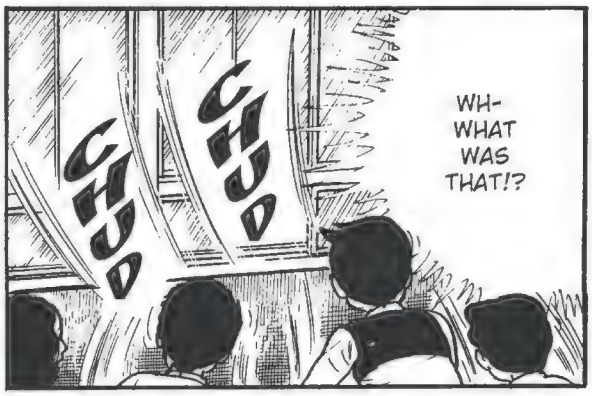
YES!
YANASE, DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?


BECAUSE HE'S SUCH A WIMP! HE CAN'T EVEN DISSECT A FROG!

HEY, STOP THAT. WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING?!

HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA

EEYAAA

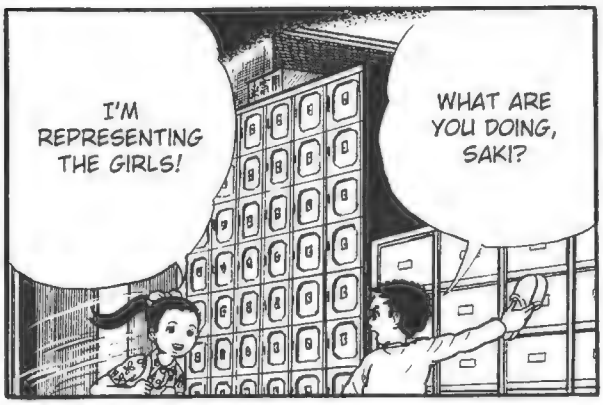

CHJD
CHJD
WH-
WHAT
WAS
THAT!?

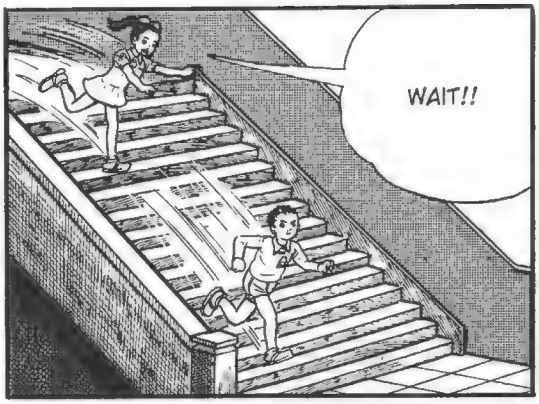
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT!?
KLAK
MR. SAKURA!
YES SIR!!
STAY HERE! DON'T LEAVE THE CLASS-ROOM!
WH-WHAT'S GOING ON!?
THE TEACHERS ARE RUNNING TOWARDS THE SCHOOL GATE!!

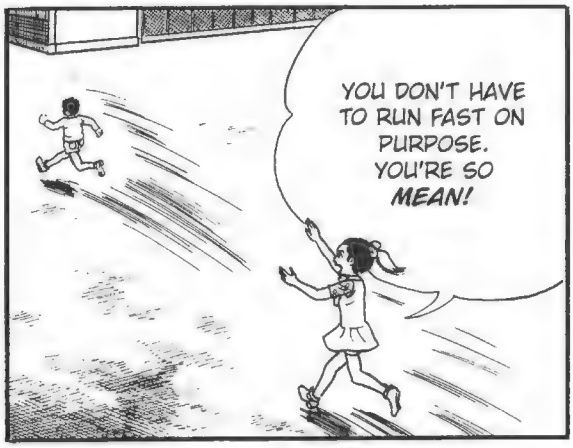
HEY, THE OTHER CLASSES ARE LOOKING OUT THE WINDOWS TOO!

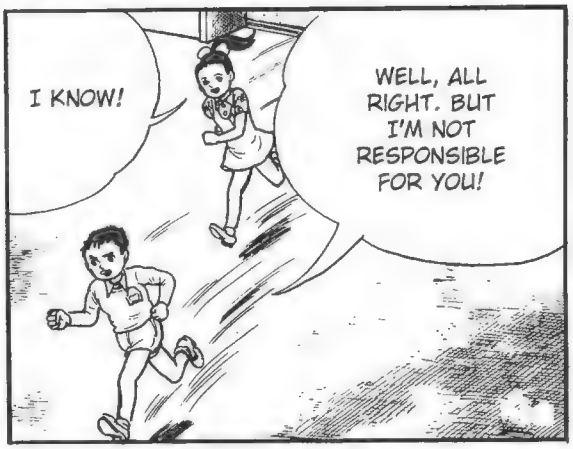
THEY'RE STILL THERE. I WONDER WHAT'S GOING ON?

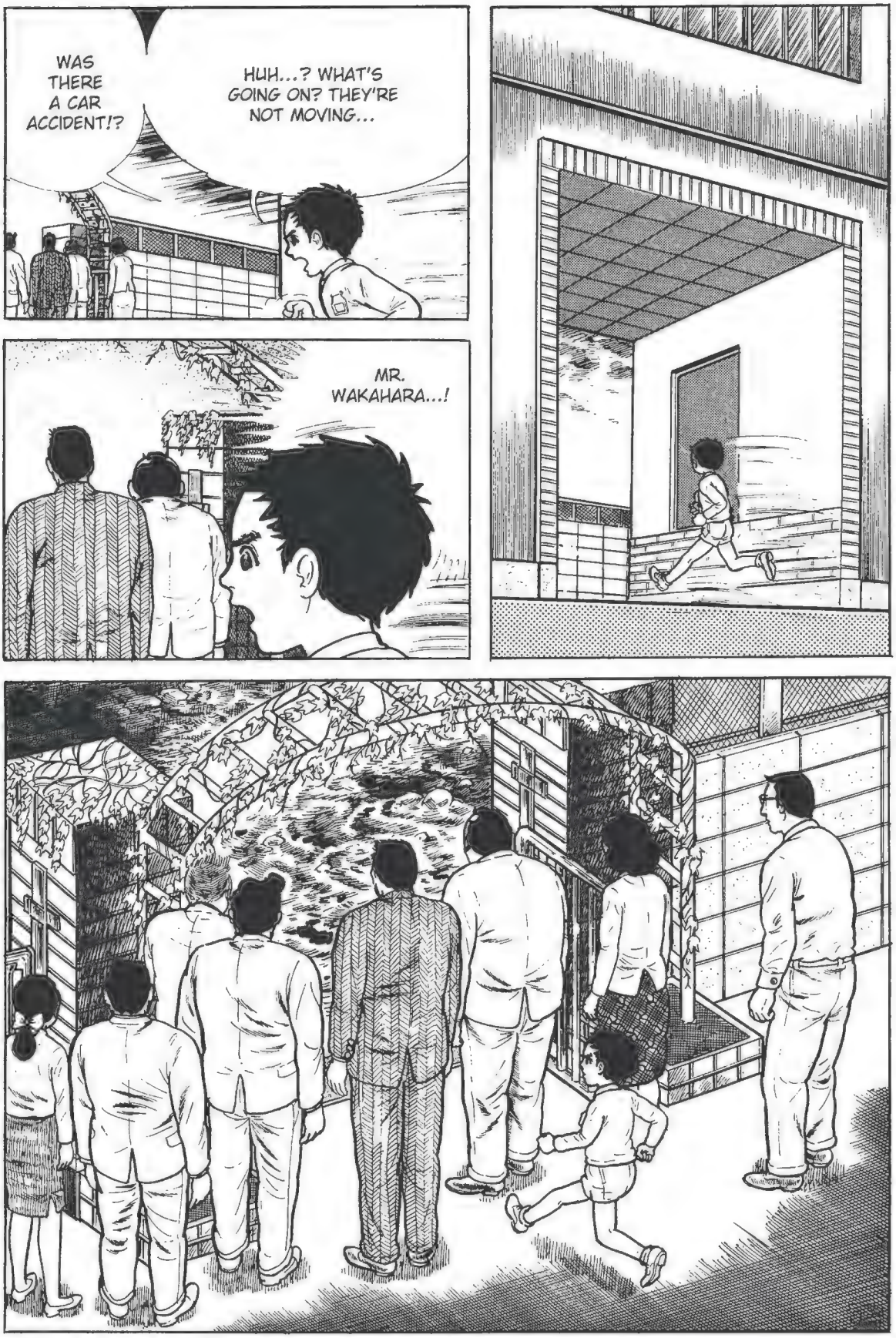
YOU GUYS STAY HERE. I'LL GO AND LOOK FOR US!


I'M REPRESENTING THE GIRLS!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, SAKI?


WAIT!!

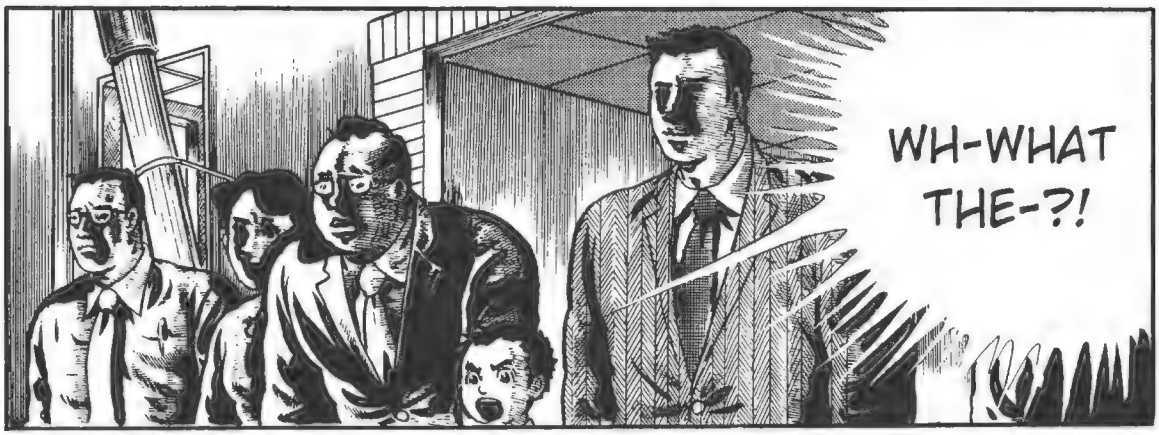

YOU DON'T HAVE TO RUN FAST ON PURPOSE. YOU'RE SO *MEAN!*


I KNOW!
WELL, ALL RIGHT. BUT I'M NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR YOU!


WAS THERE A CAR ACCIDENT!?
HUH...? WHAT'S GOING ON? THEY'RE NOT MOVING...
MR. WAKAHARA...!

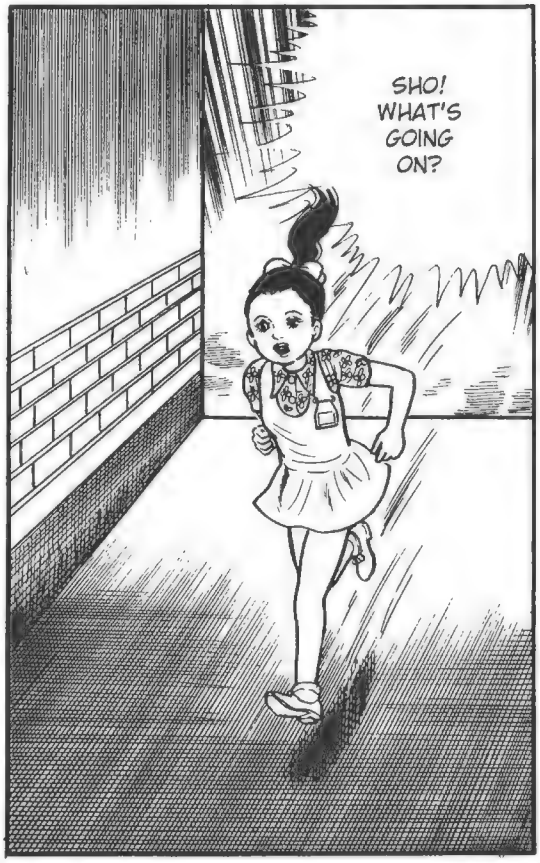
AHH!

AGGH!

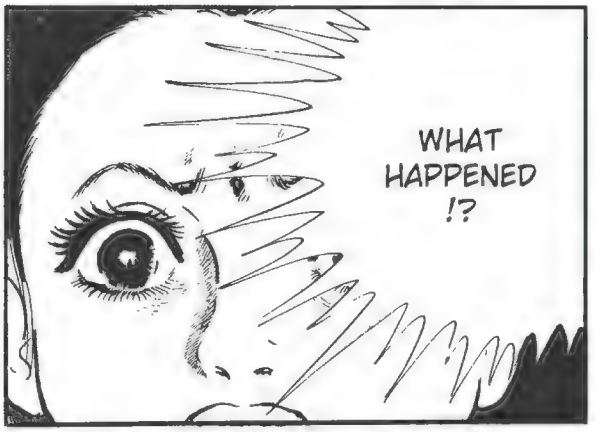

WH-WHAT THE-?!

AH!!

NO BUSES, NO TAXIS!!
WH-WHAT ...WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ROAD?

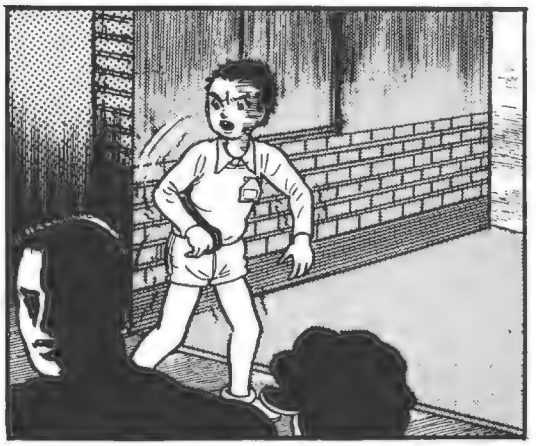

SHO! WHAT'S GOING ON?

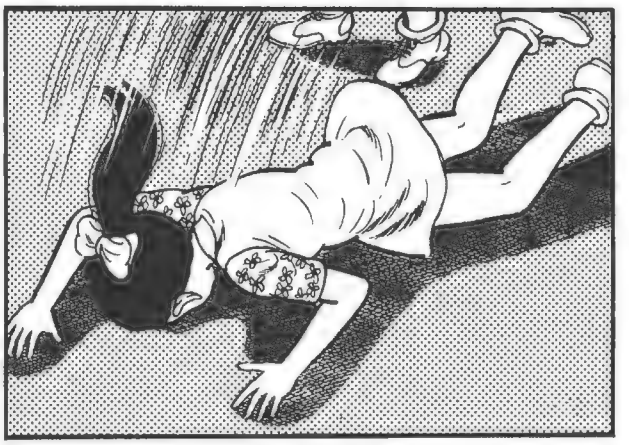
WHERE'D THEY GO?
THE BUILDINGS, THE HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET...!?

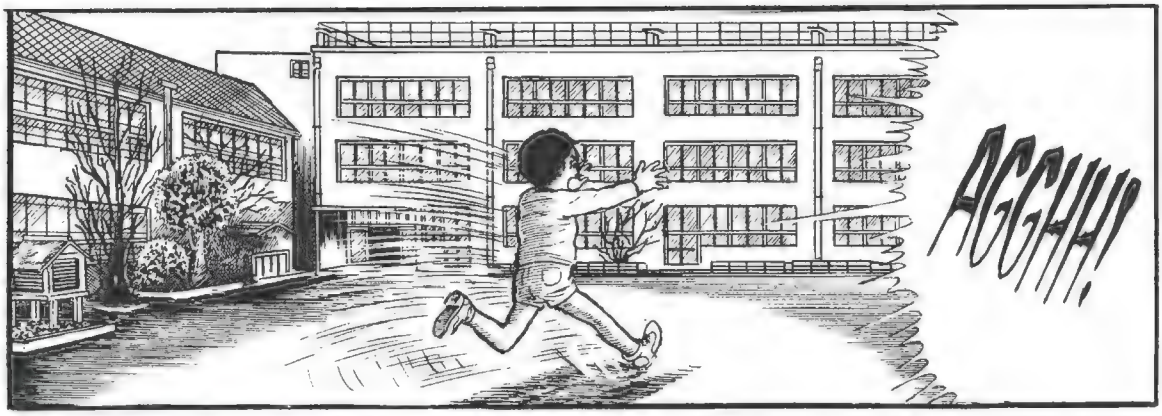

WHAT HAPPENED !?

IT'S JUST SAND AND ROCKS!

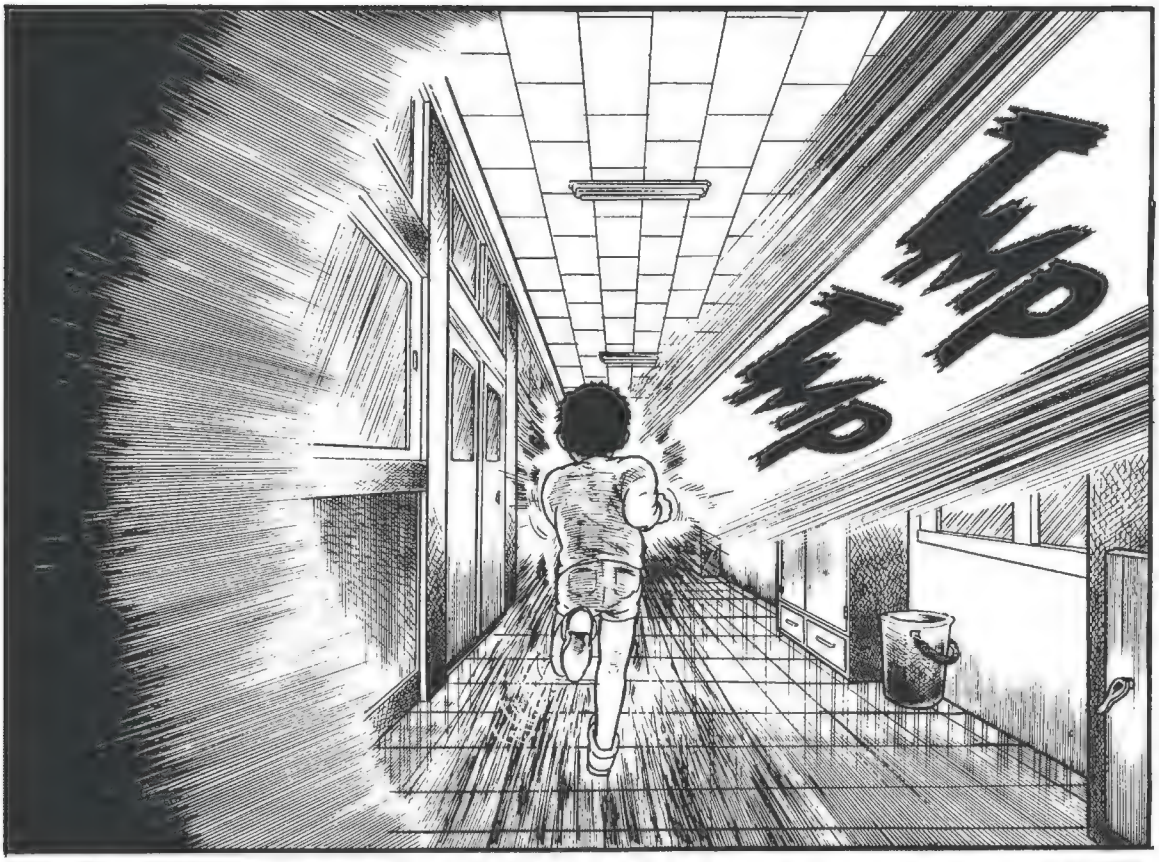
EEEHRAAA!

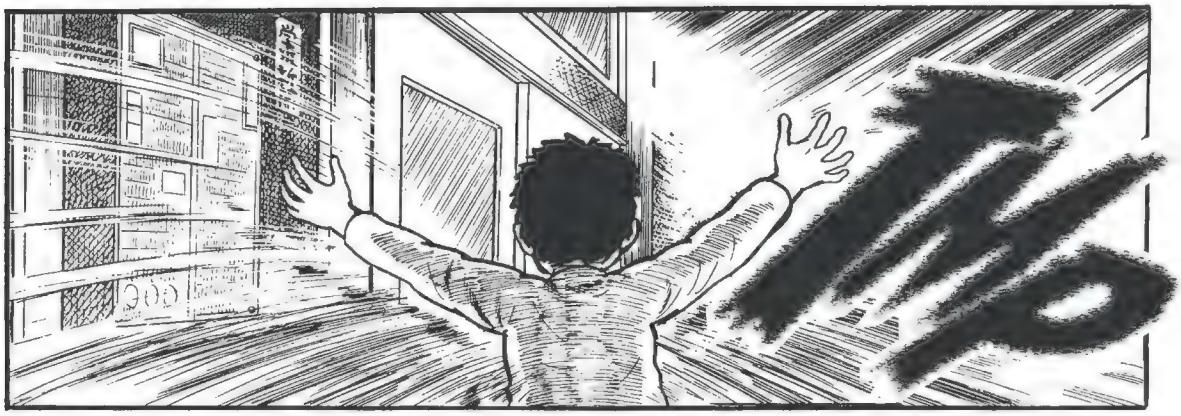





AGGHH!

EVERYTHING OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL IS GONE!!

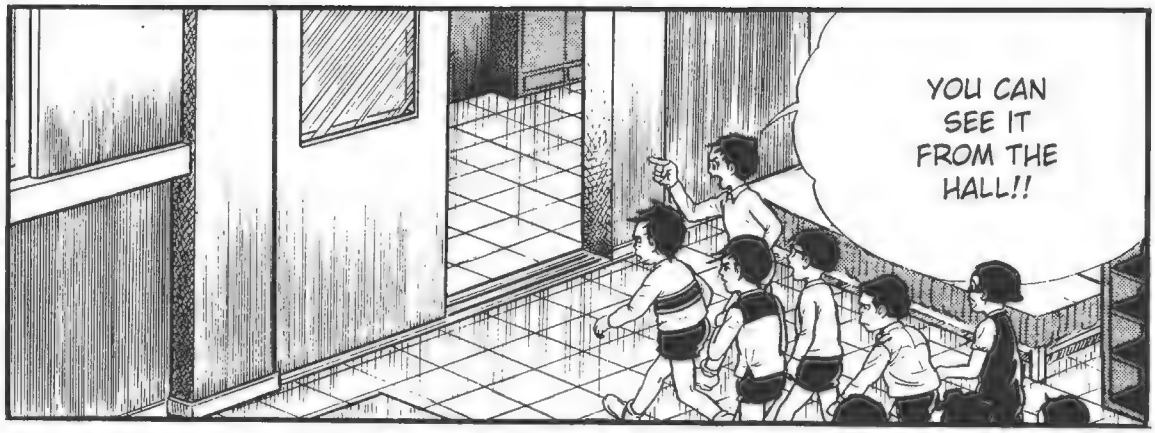

TKP
TKP

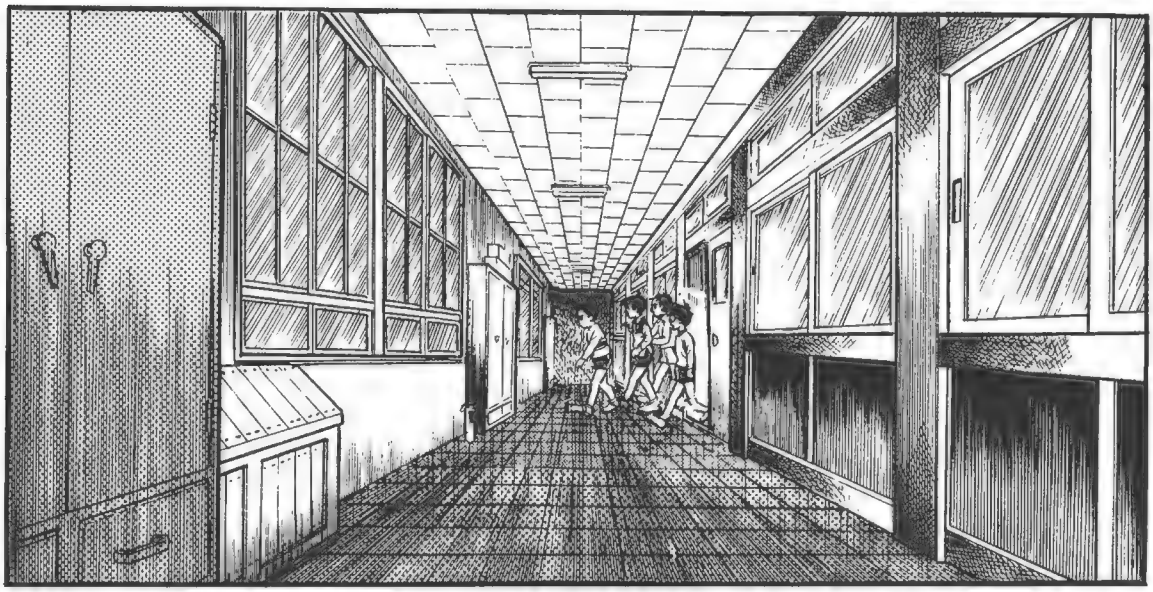

TKP

KLAK

HEY!! THERE'S NOTHING OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL!!

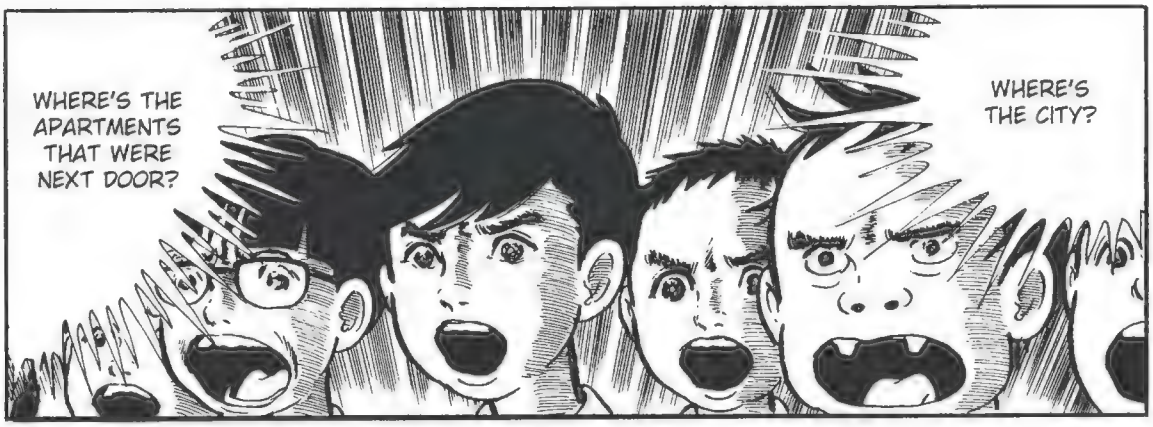
IT'S TURNED INTO A DESERT!
WHAT!?
A DESERT ?!
HA HA HA
THE TEACHERS ARE STANDING BY THE GATE LIKE THEY'RE FROZEN!
IT'S TRUE!!

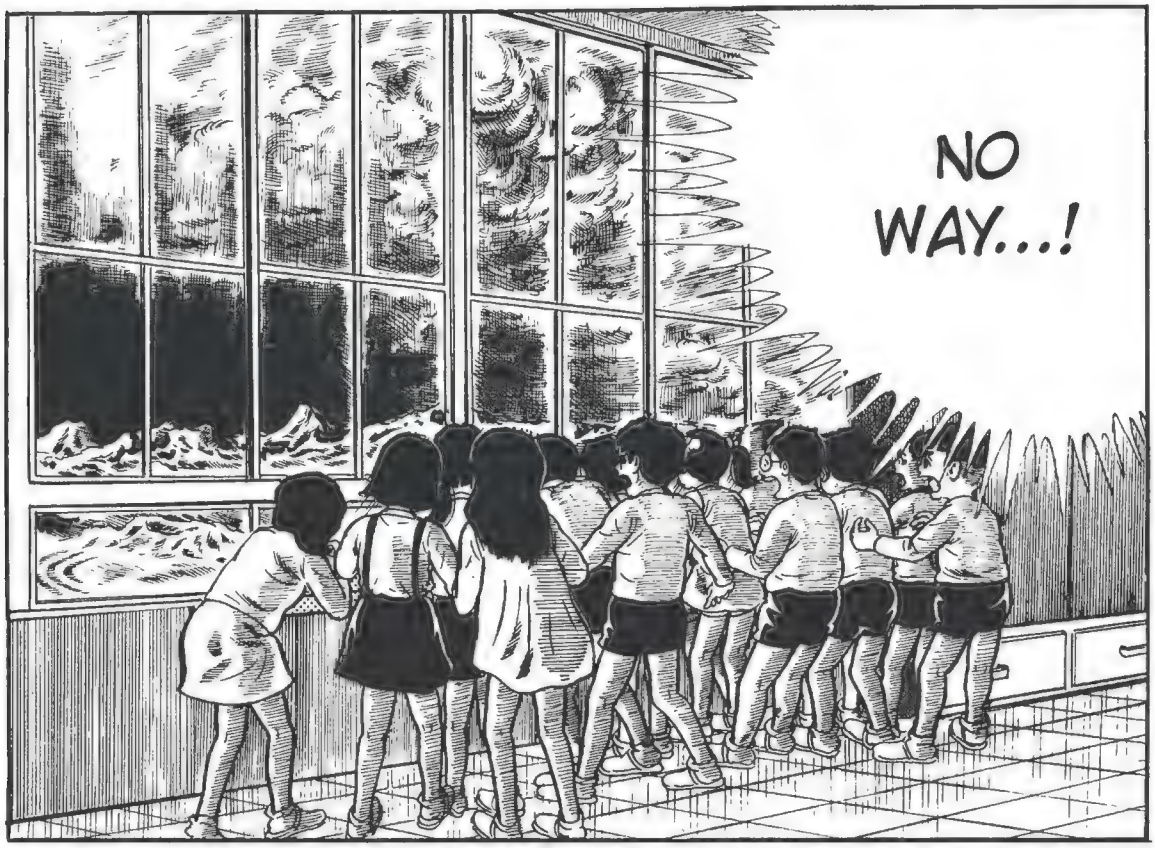

YOU CAN SEE IT FROM THE HALL!!

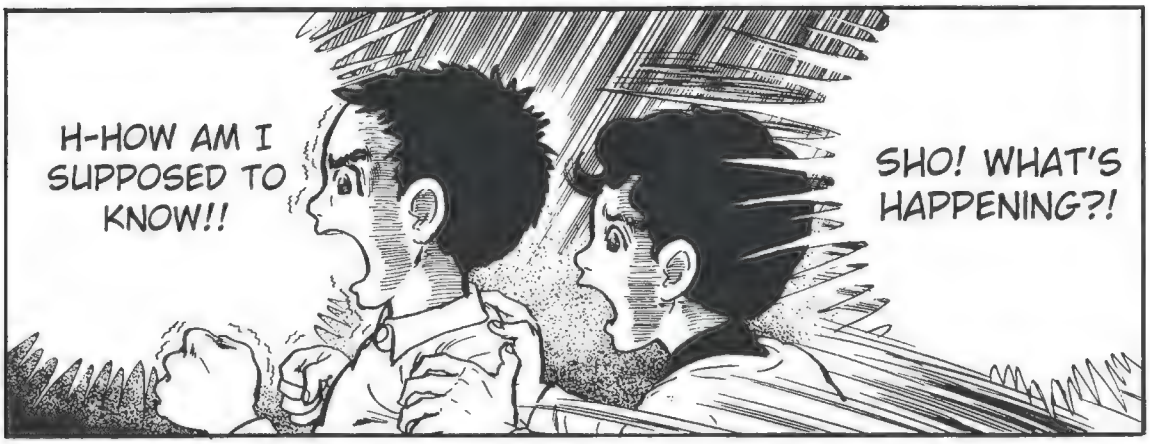


AAHH!

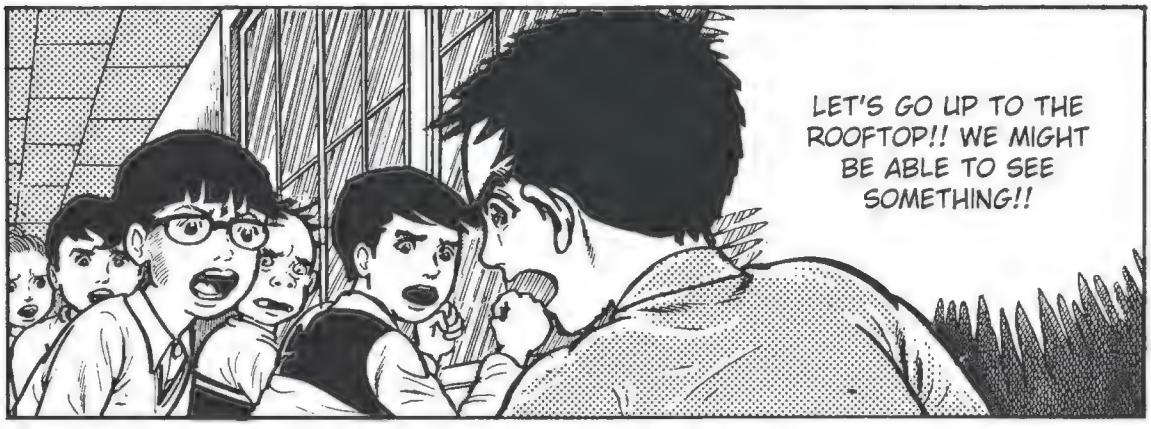
EEYAA!!
AIEEE!!

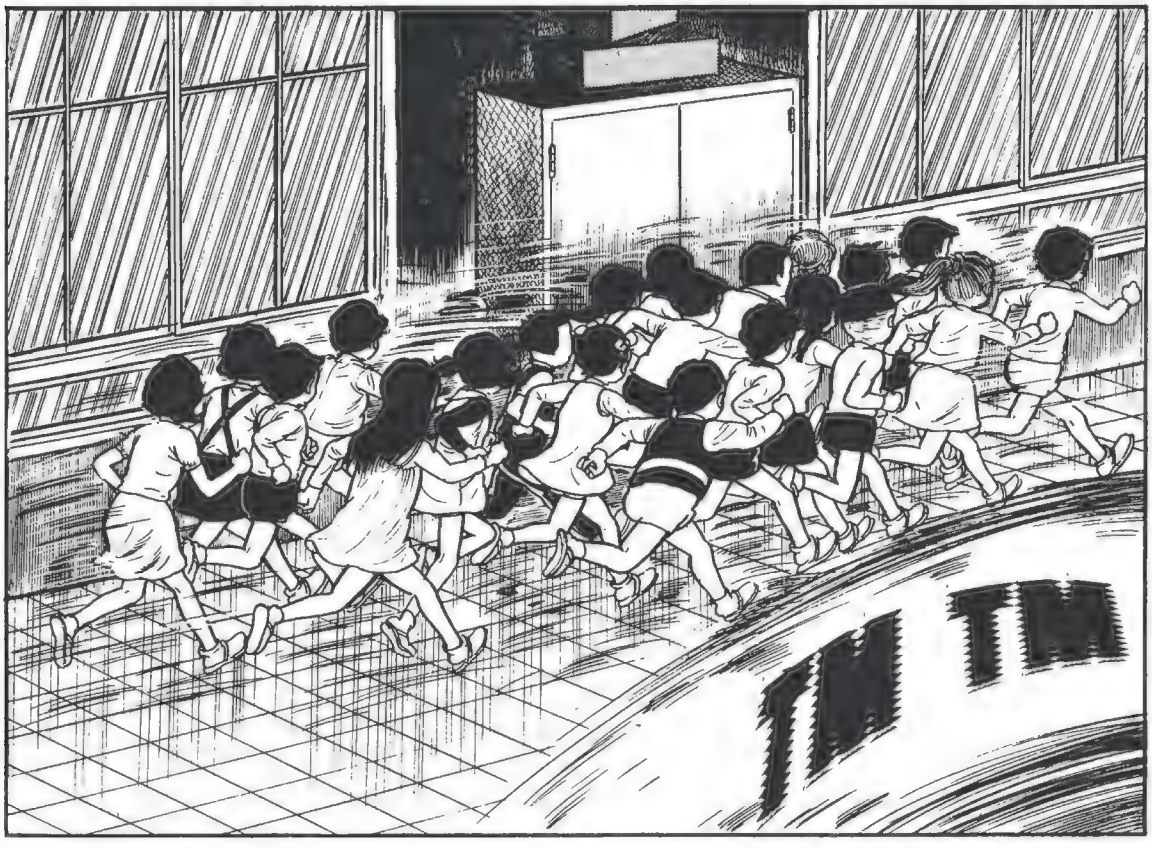

WHERE'S THE APARTMENTS THAT WERE NEXT DOOR?
WHERE'S THE CITY?

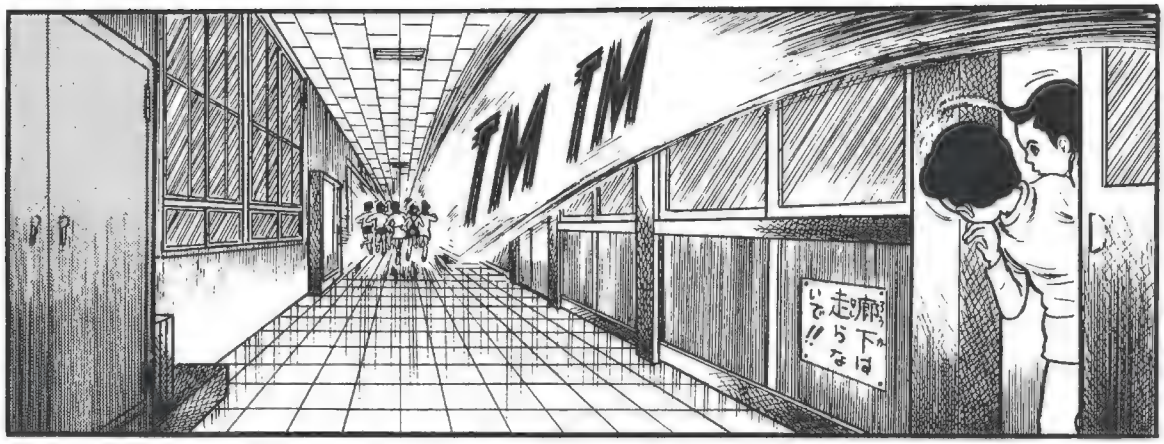

NO WAY...!

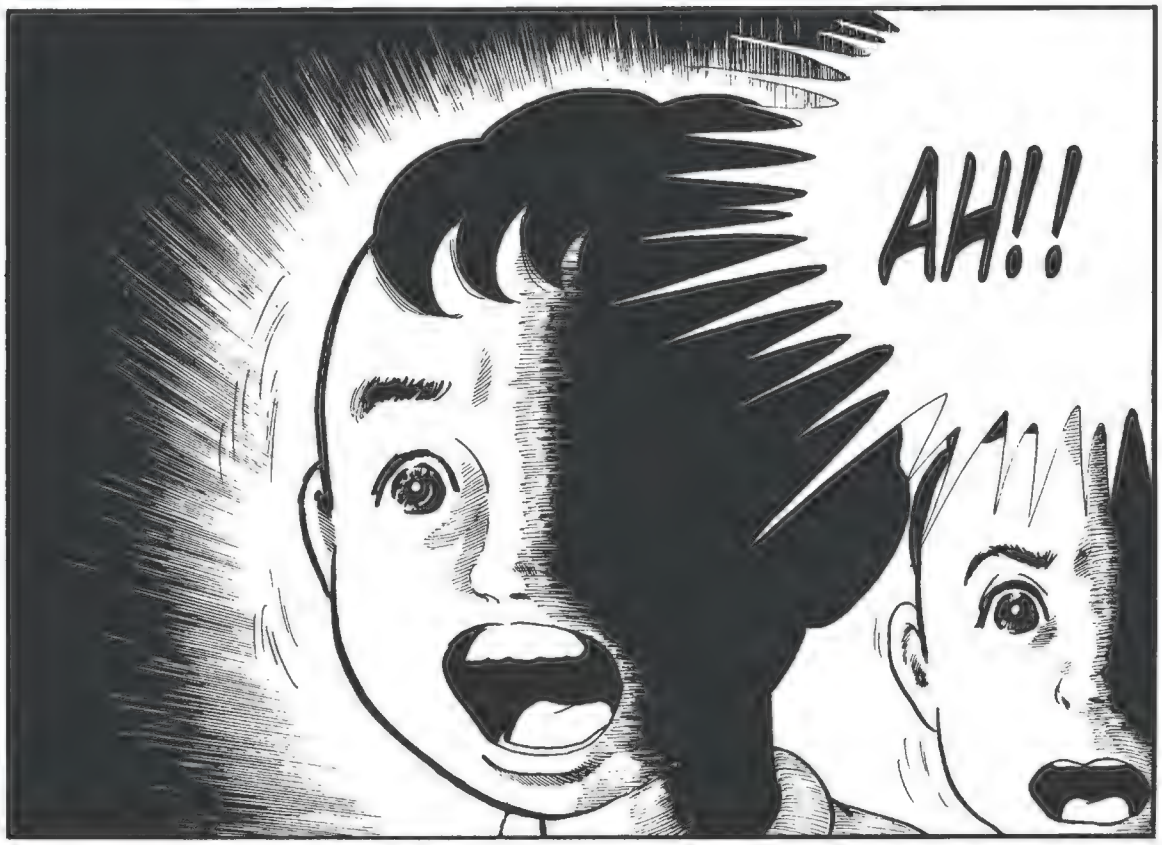

H-HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO KNOW!!
SHO! WHAT'S HAPPENING?!

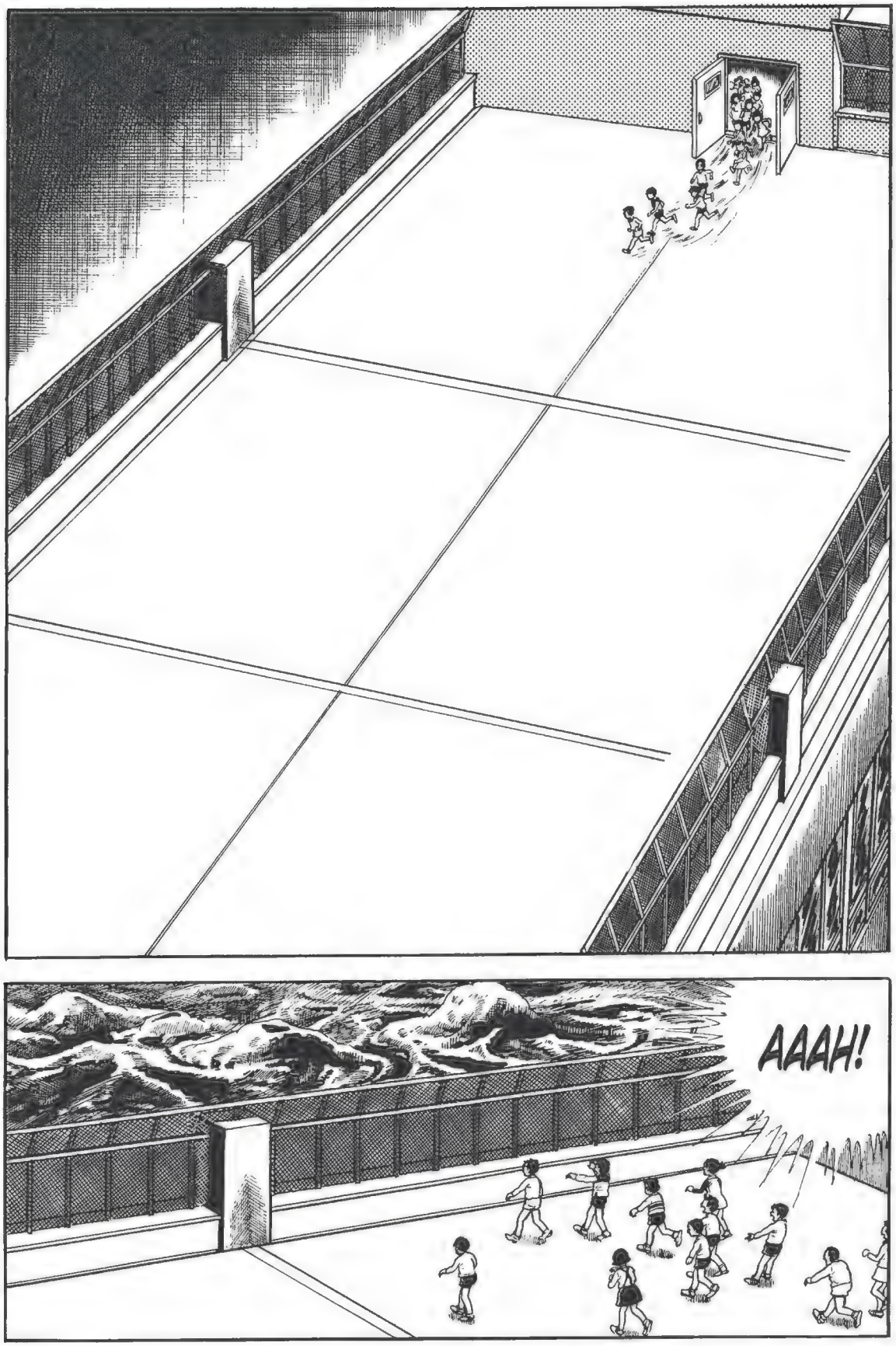
IT'S A MIRAGE! IT MUST BE AN ILLUSION OR SOMETHING!
TUMP


LET'S GO UP TO THE ROOFTOP!! WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO SEE SOMETHING!!

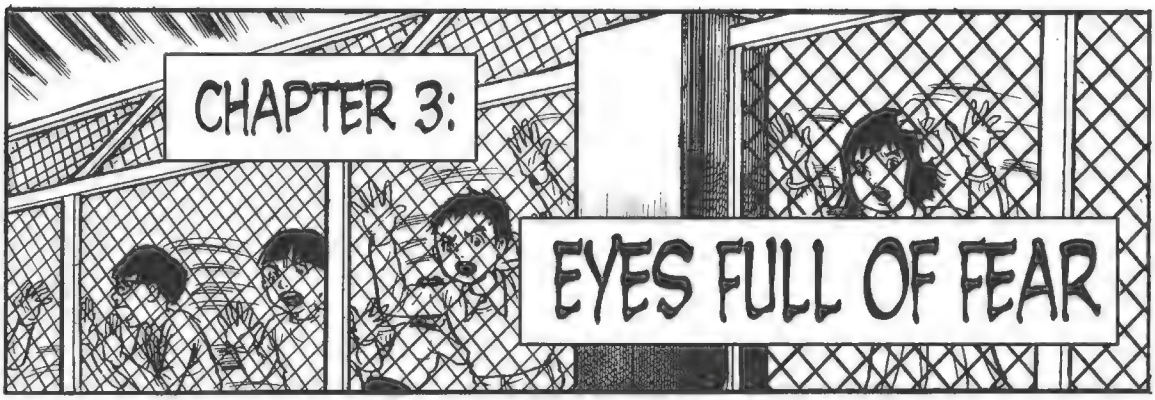



TM TM
廊下は走らないで!!


AH!!

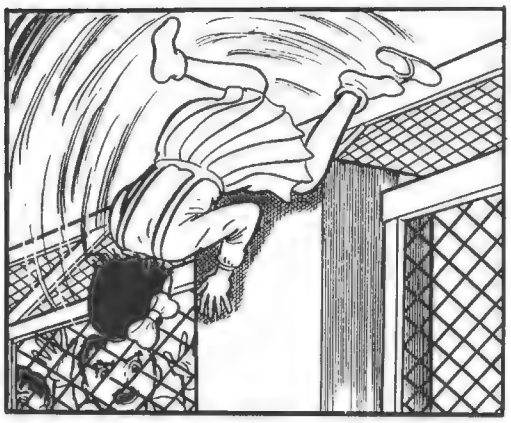

AAAH!

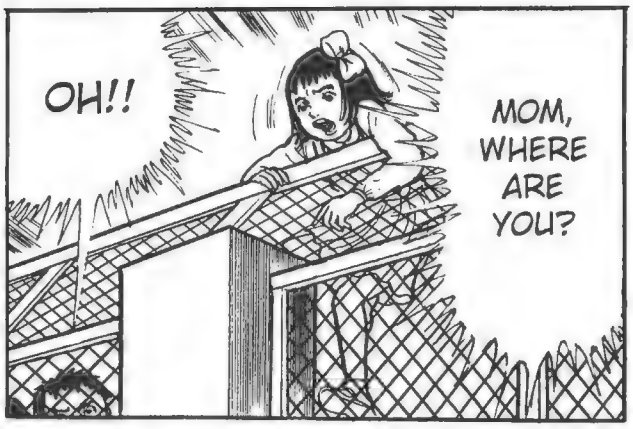
THAT'S RIGHT! WHAT HAPPENED TO MY HOUSE!?
WHERE'S MY HOUSE?

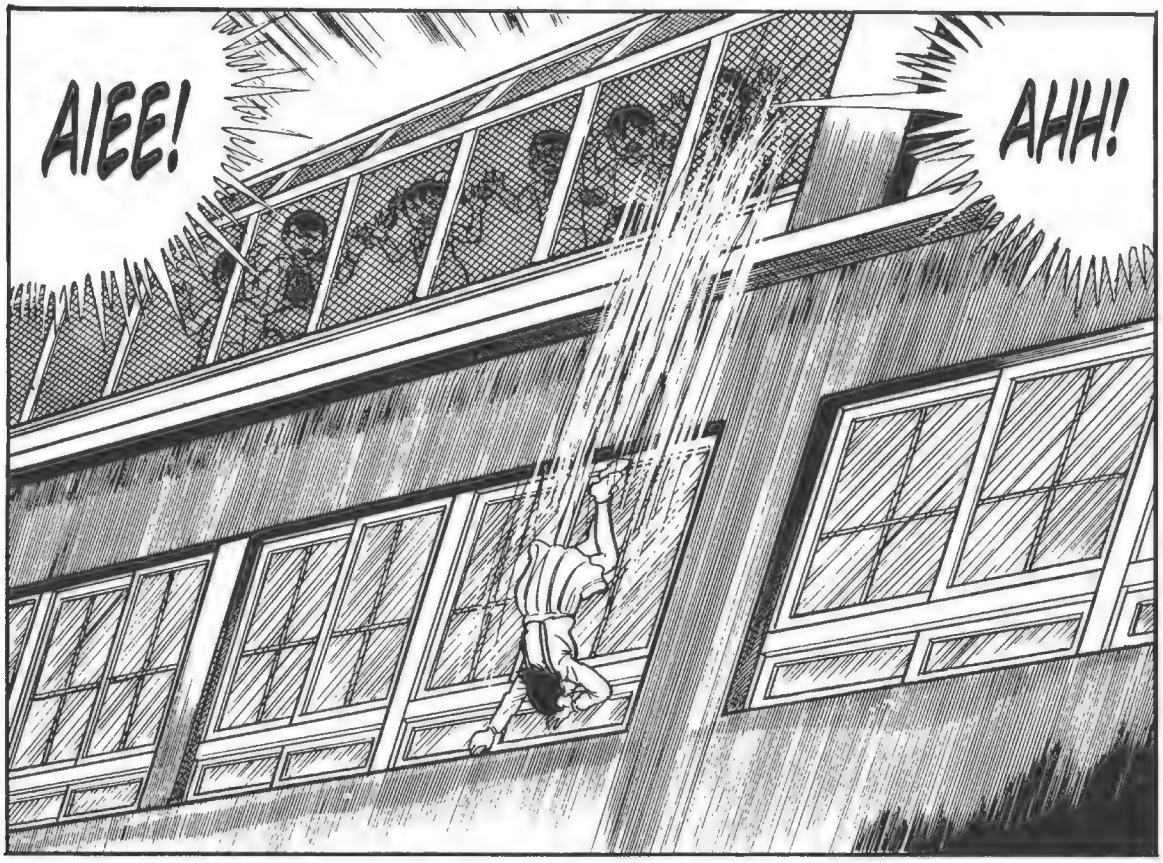

CHAPTER 3:
EYES FULL OF FEAR

MOM!!

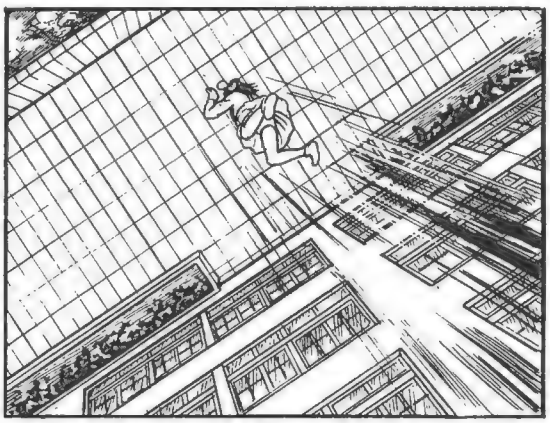
MO-O-OM!

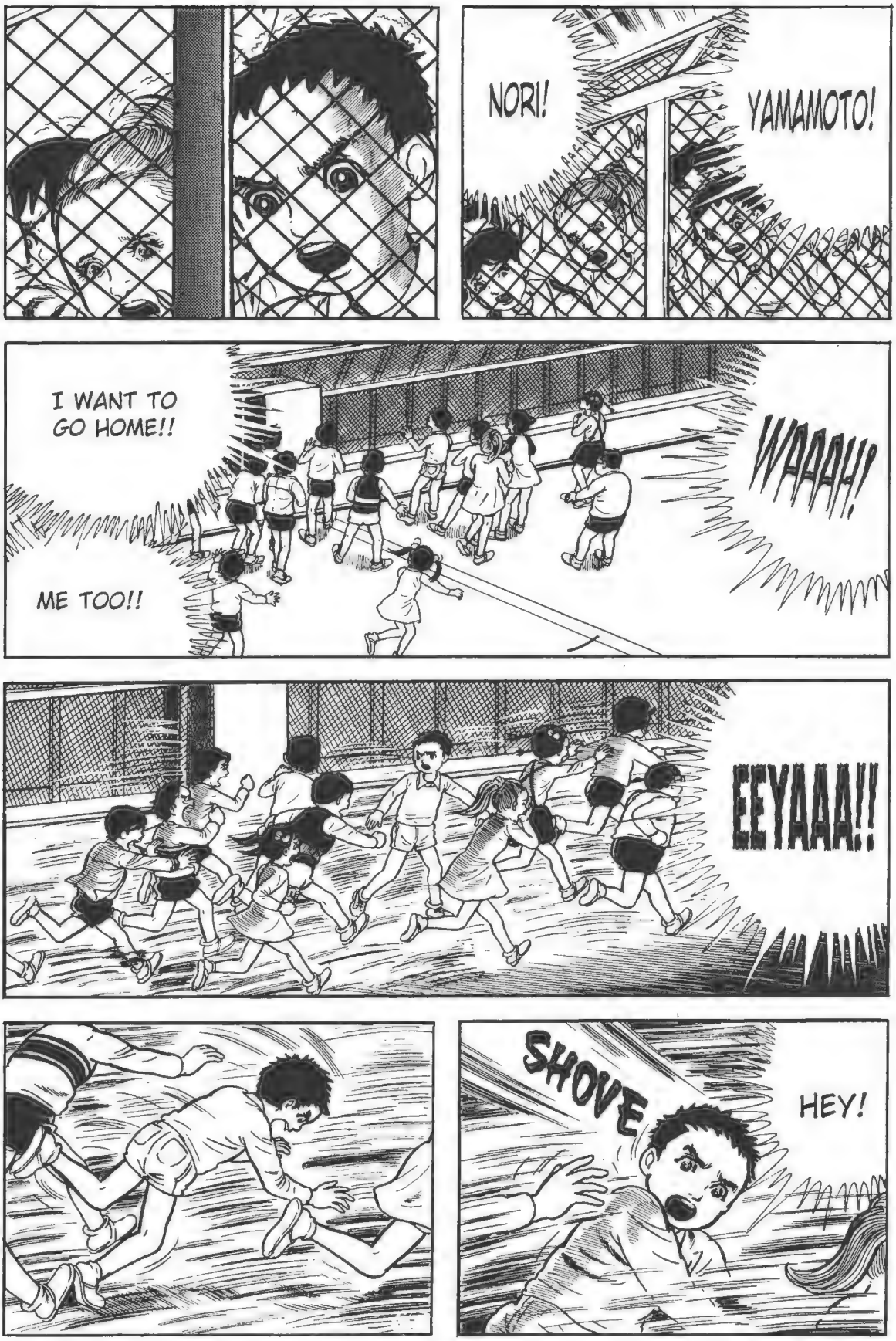


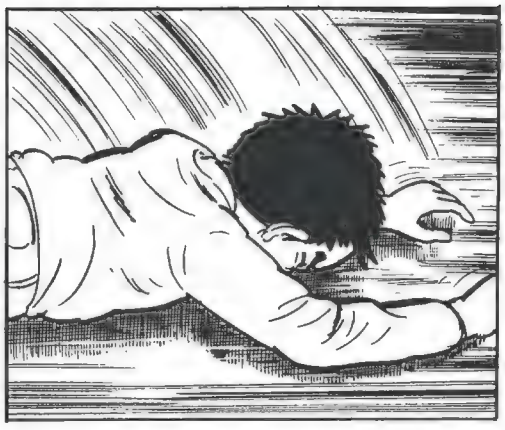

OH!!
MOM, WHERE ARE YOU?

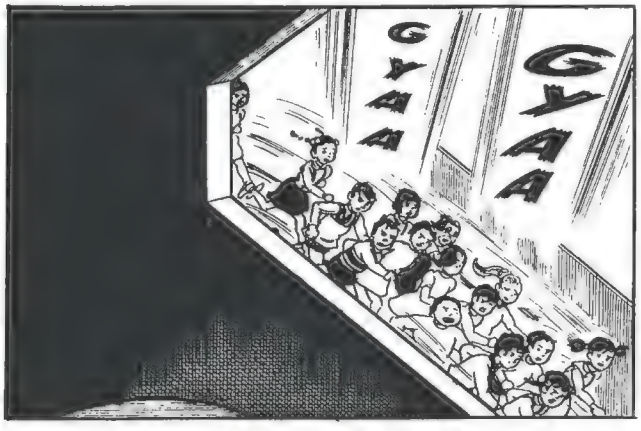

AIEE!
AHH!

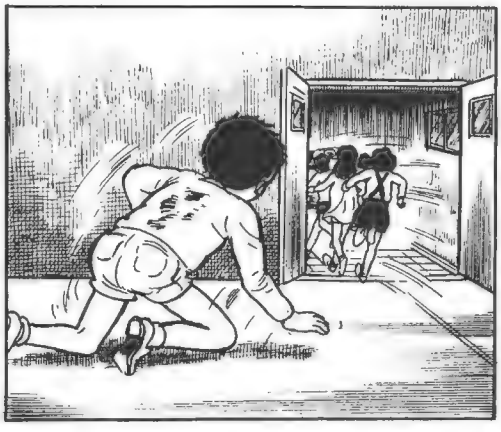
TH
UD

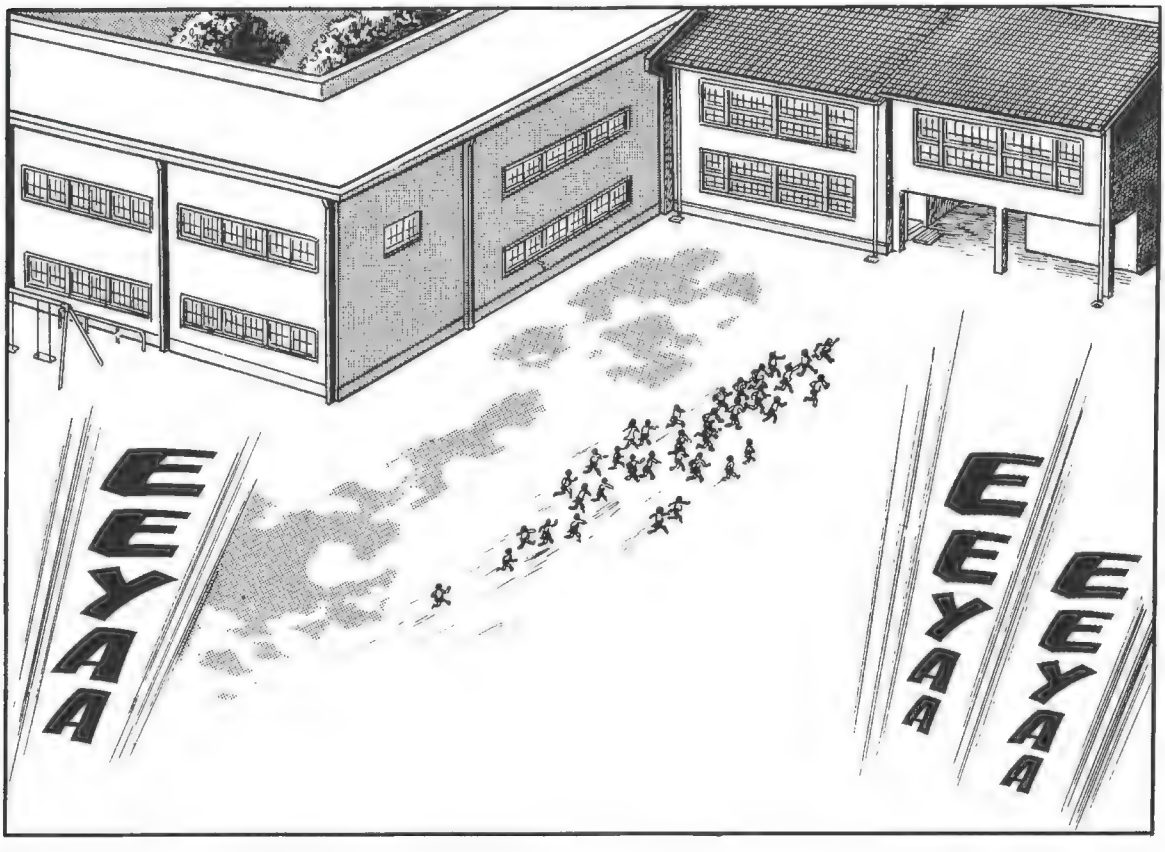



NORI!
YAMAMOTO!
I WANT TO GO HOME!!
WAAAH!
ME TOO!!
EEYAAA!!
SHOVE
HEY!



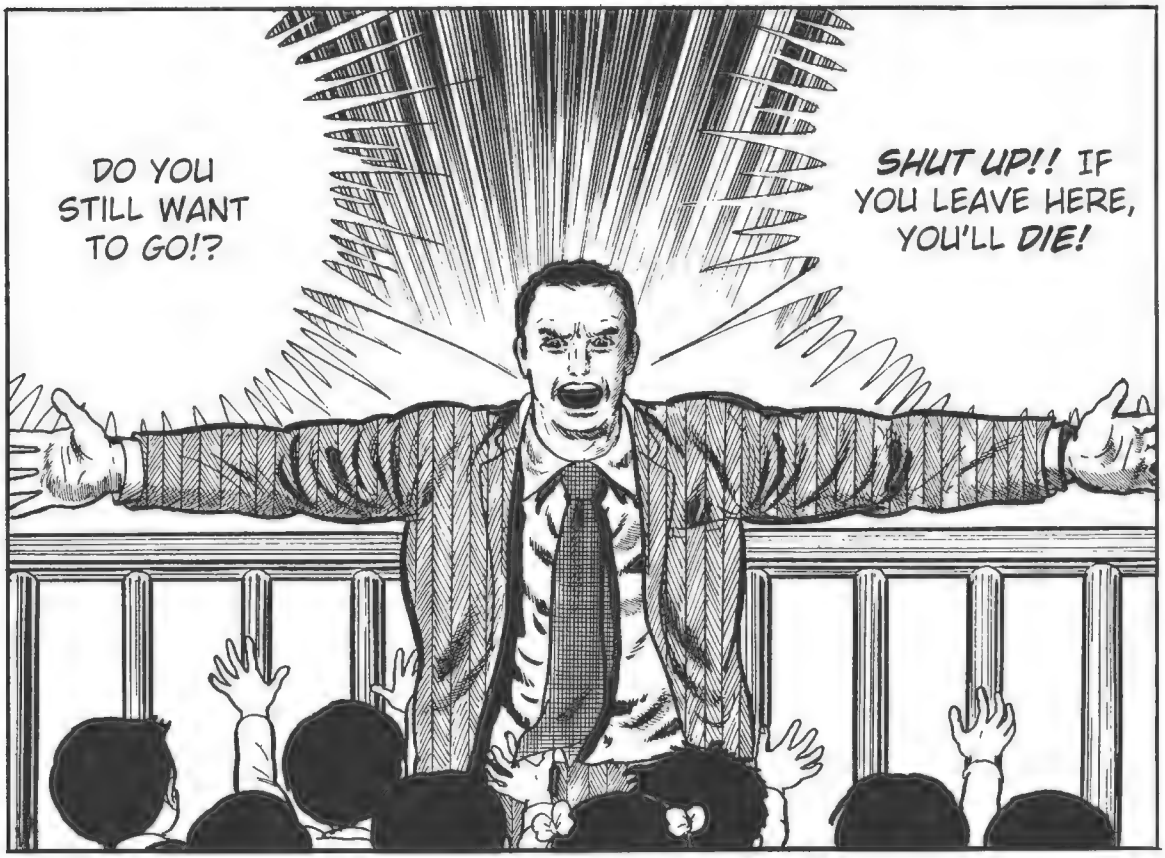

GYAA
GYAA




EEYAA
EEYAA
EEYAA

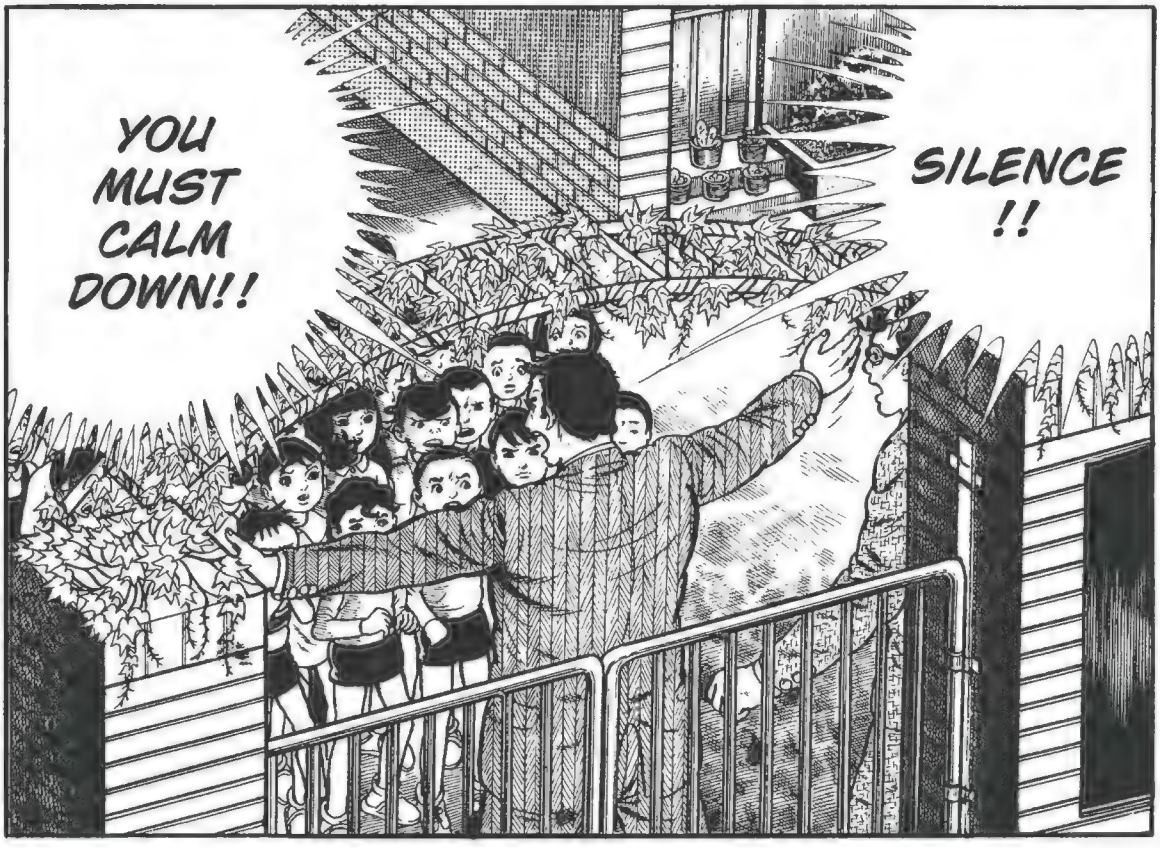
OH!!
TIN TIN TIN
NO!!
S-STOP!! YOU CAN'T GO OUT THERE!
KACHING

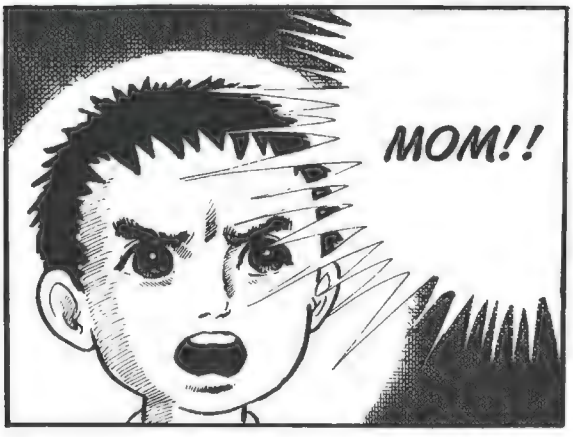
WE WANT TO GO HOME! OPEN THE GATE! PLEASE!
LET ME GO HOME!

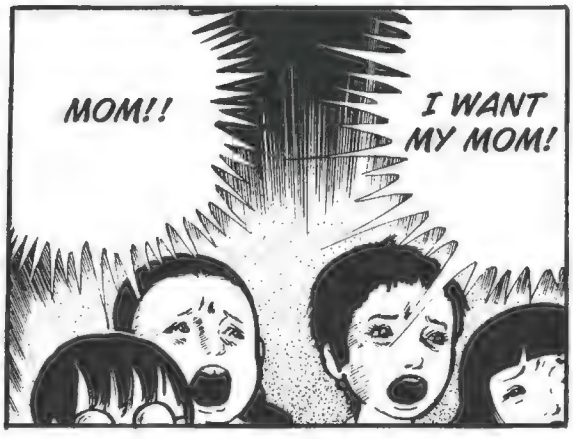

DO YOU STILL WANT TO GO!?
SHUT UP!! IF YOU LEAVE HERE, YOU'LL DIE!

ME TOO!!
I DON'T CARE! I WANT TO GO HOME!!
WHAP
GUH!

ME TOO!!
ME TOO!!
I WANT TO GO HOME!


YOU MUST CALM DOWN!!
SILENCE !!

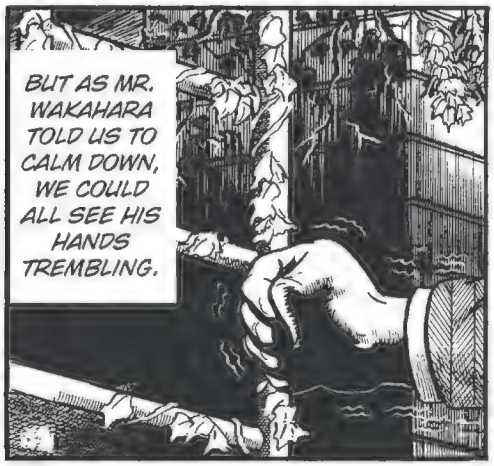

MOM!!


MOM!!
I WANT MY MOM!

...AND SUDDENLY I RECALLED OUR FIGHT BEFORE I LEFT FOR SCHOOL THAT MORNING.
AS I SHOUTED "MOM," I BURST INTO TEARS...

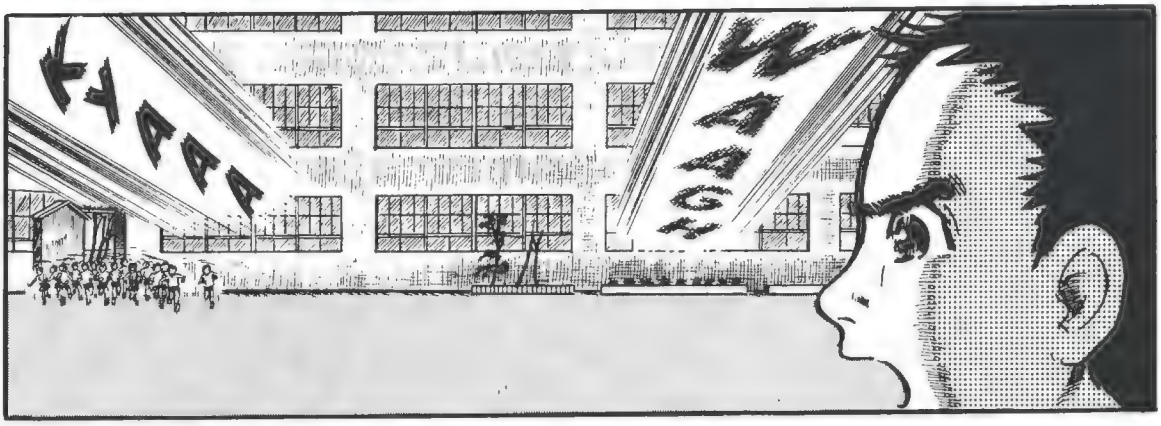
I'M NEVER COMING HOME!!

I HOPE YOU NEVER COME BACK!!
FINE BY ME!!

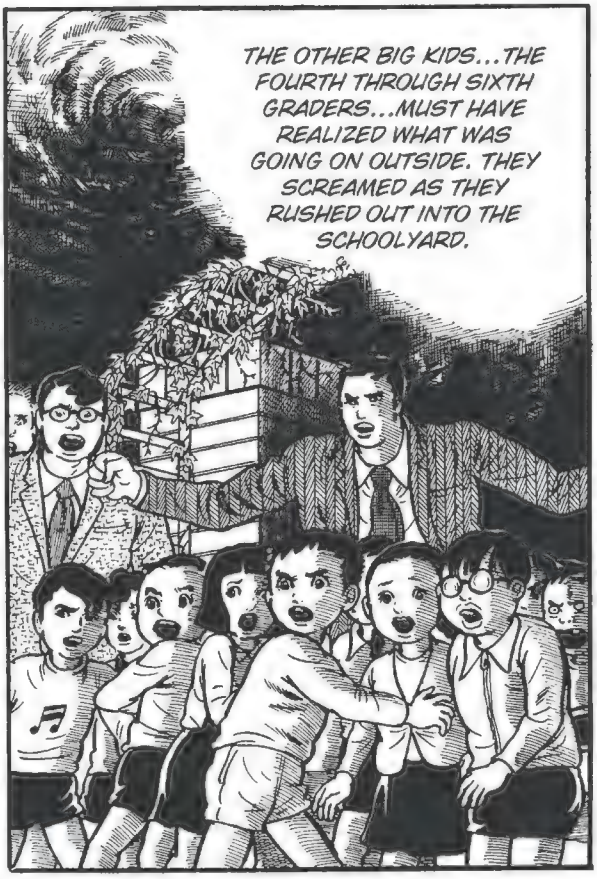

BUT AS MR. WAKAHARA TOLD US TO CALM DOWN, WE COULD ALL SEE HIS HANDS TREMBLING.

DON'T WORRY! JUST CALM DOWN!!
CALM DOWN!!

WAAGH
WAAGH
WAAGH
WAAGH
HEY!!

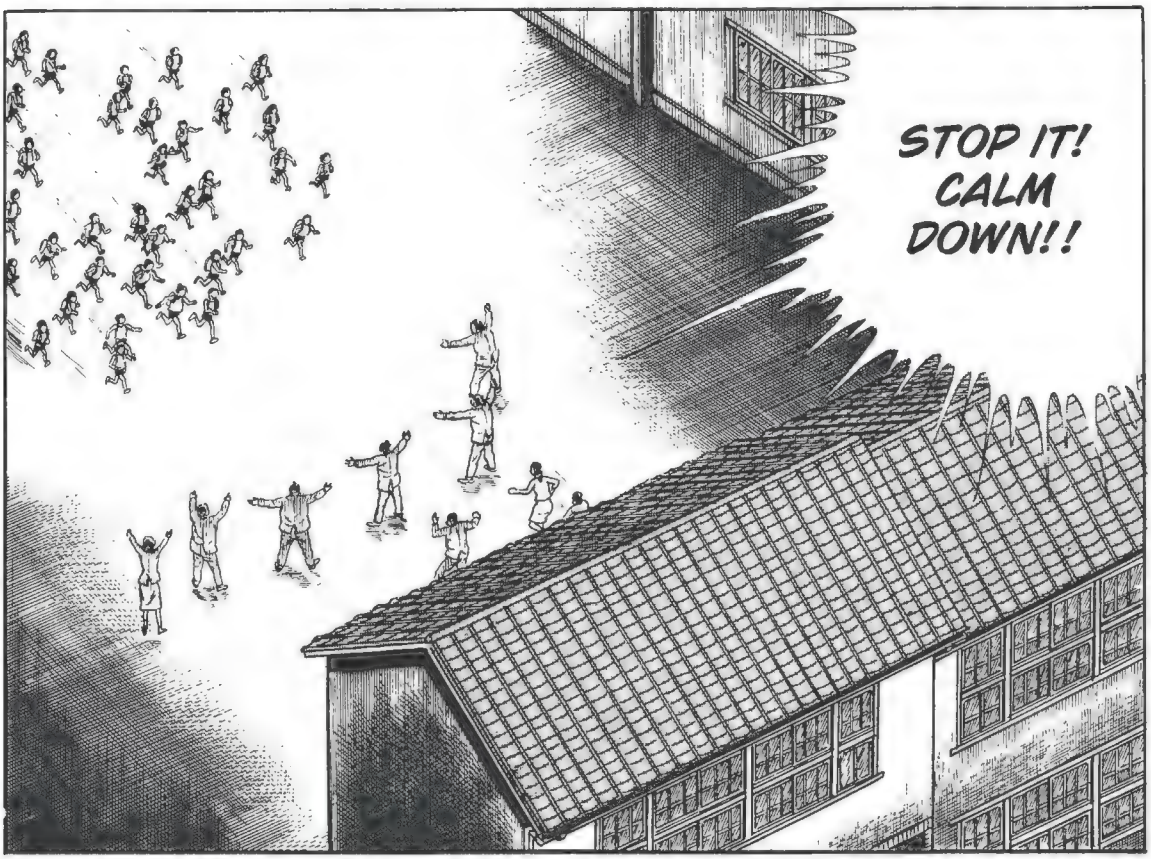

KYAAA
WAAGH

WAAH
AAGGH
EEYAAA


THE OTHER BIG KIDS...THE FOURTH THROUGH SIXTH GRADERS...MUST HAVE REALIZED WHAT WAS GOING ON OUTSIDE. THEY SCREAMED AS THEY RUSHED OUT INTO THE SCHOOLYARD.

WE HAVE TO STOP THEM!
NO!!

CALM DOWN!!


STOP IT! CALM DOWN!!

AIEEEE
WAGH
CALM DOWN!!

LISTEN TO US! CALM DOWN!

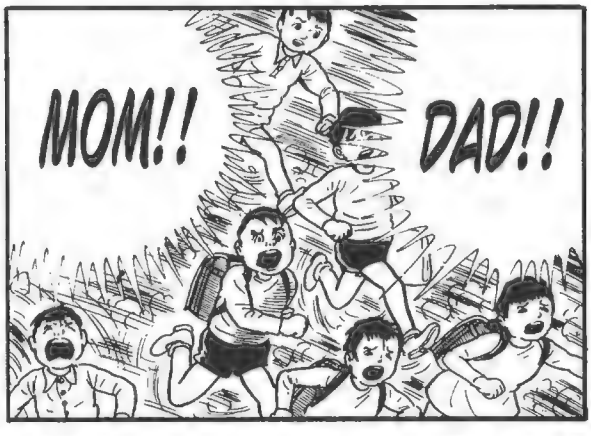
MOM! DAD!
MOM!

SLAP

I TOLD YOU, BE QUIET!!

TUMP
WHAP
STOP IT! JUST CALM DOWN!

CALM DOWN!!


MOM!!
DAD!!

WAA AAGH

EEYAH

OH!

DAD!!
MOM!!

AH!!

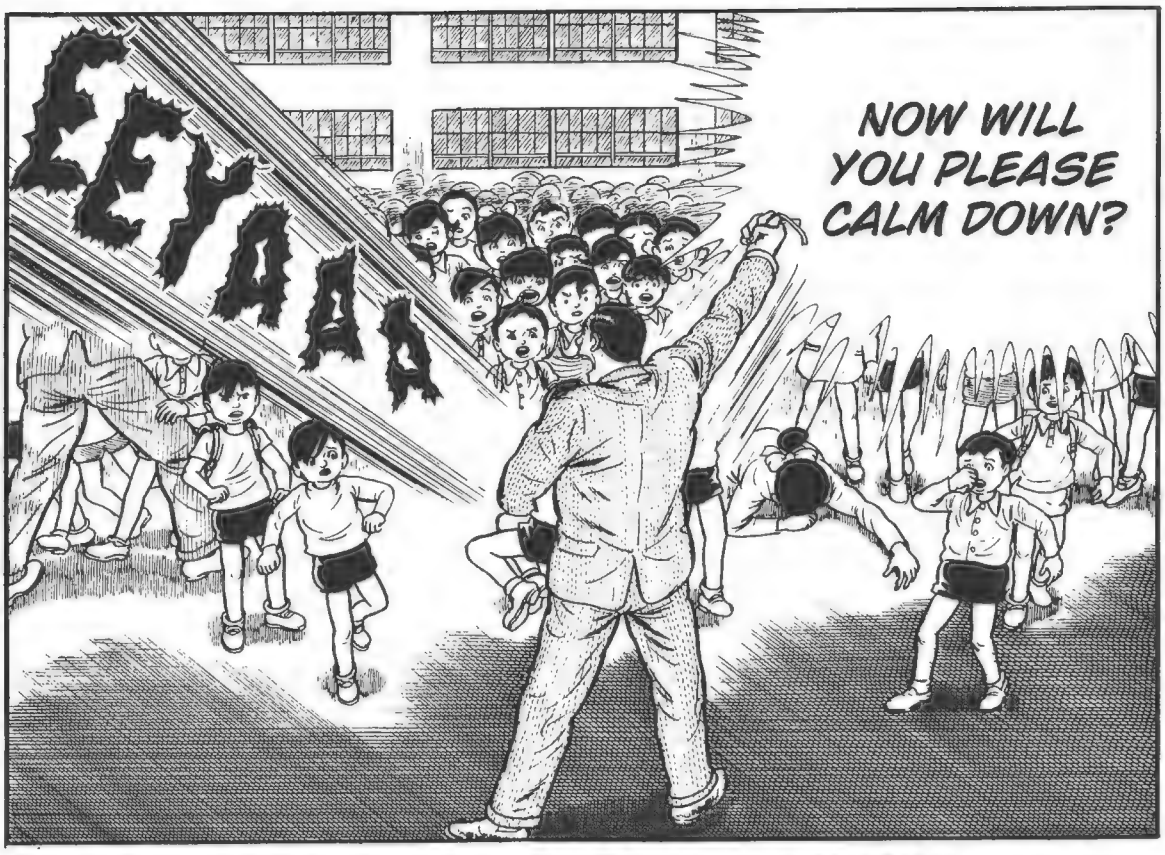
SPLIT

STOP,
EVERYONE!!

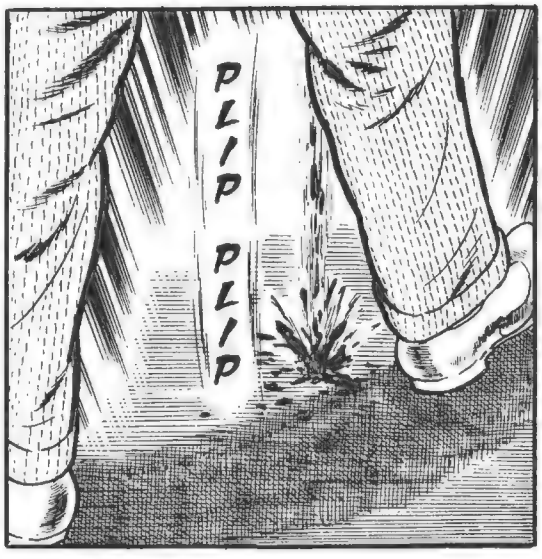
KRAK
THIS IS WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF YOU DON'T STOP!!

SLISH
GYAA

NOW, WILL YOU CALM DOWN!!


EEYAA
NOW WILL YOU PLEASE CALM DOWN?

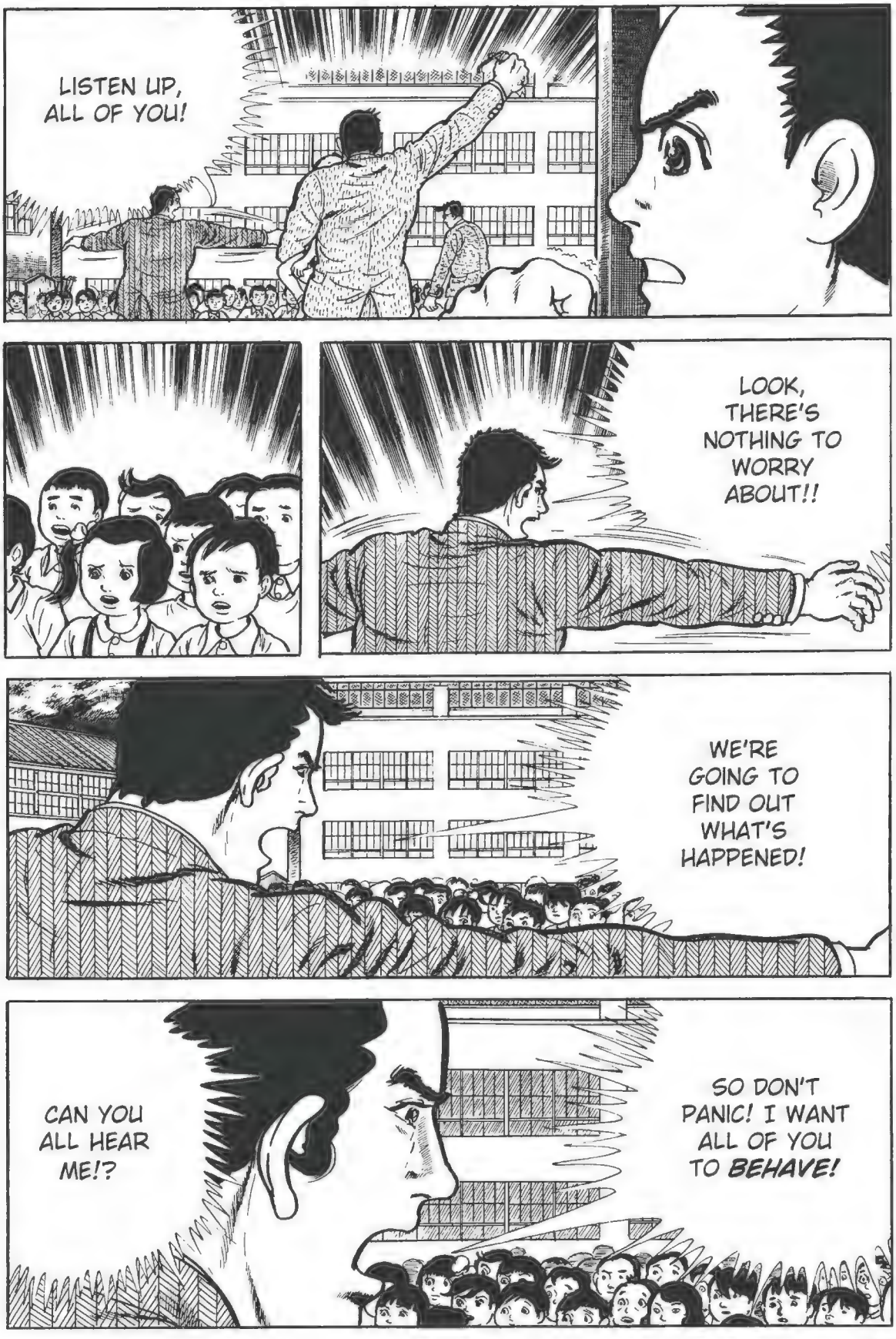
EEYAA!
GET BACK! GET BACK TO YOUR SEATS!

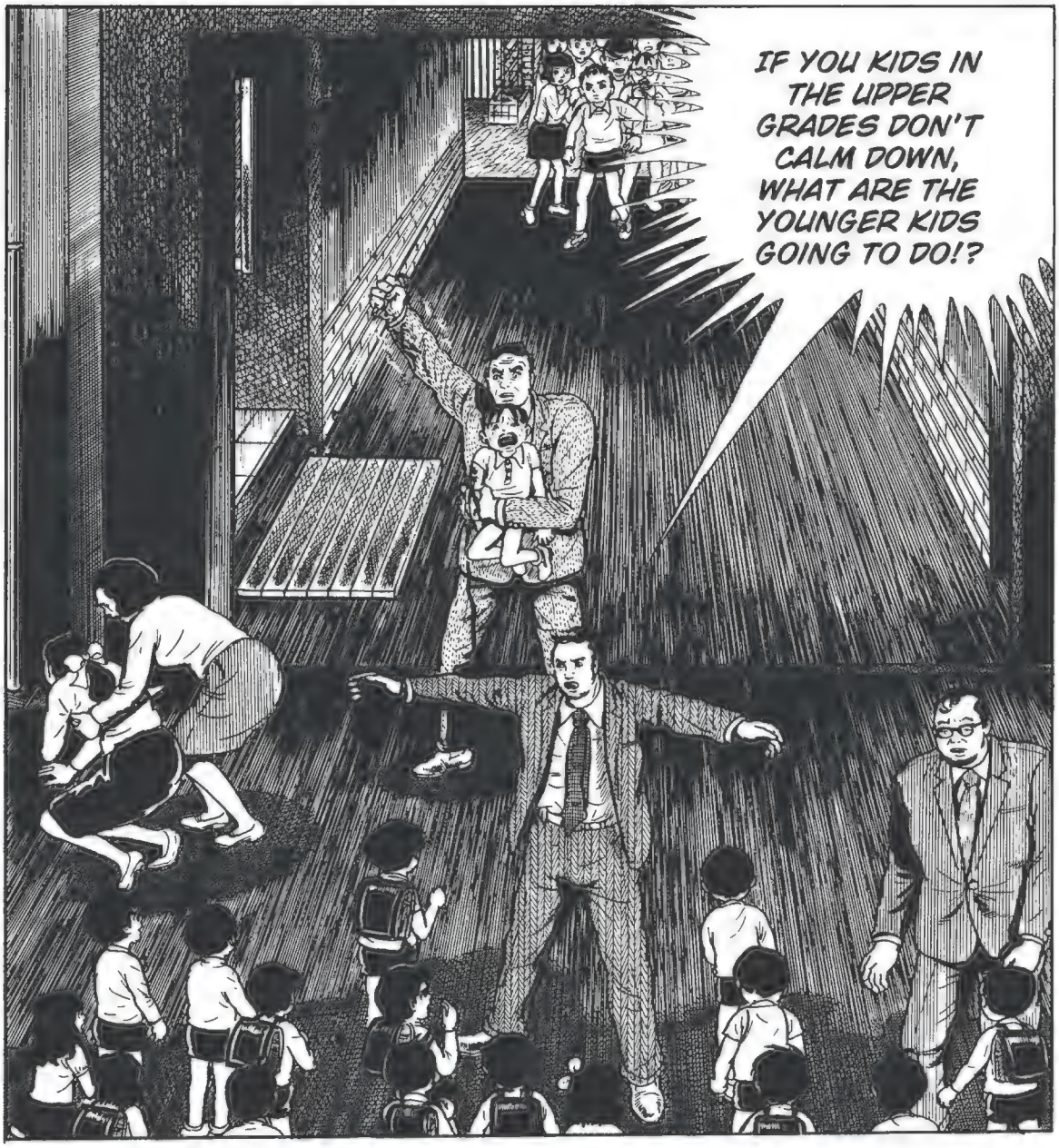

PLIP
PLIP

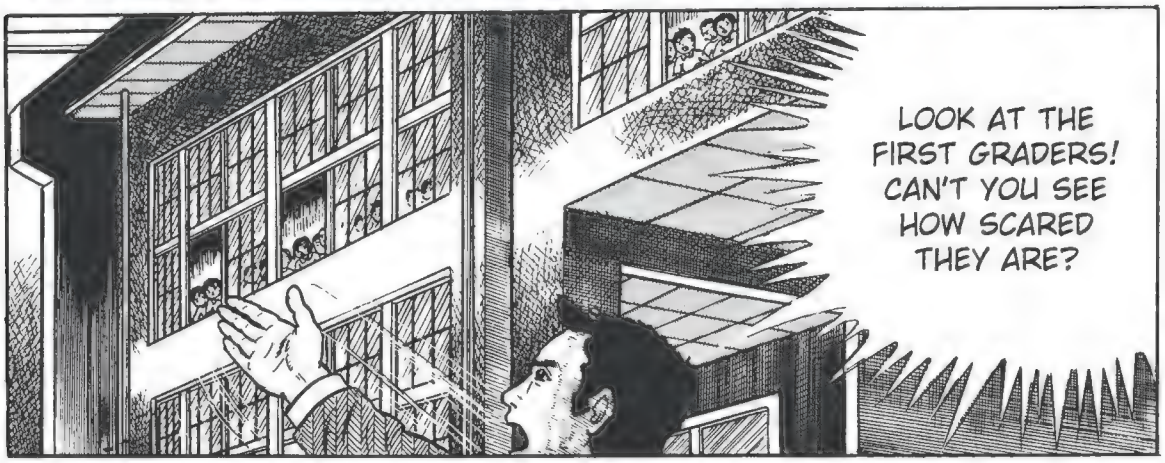
GYAAGGH!

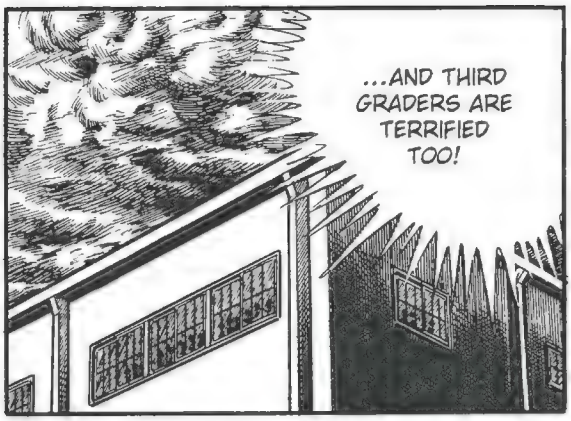
MR. ARAKAWA!

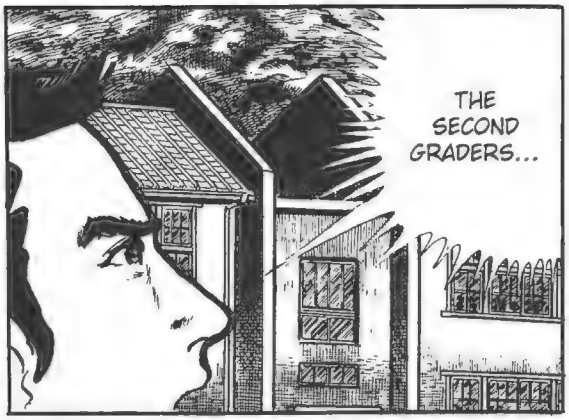
EEYAA!

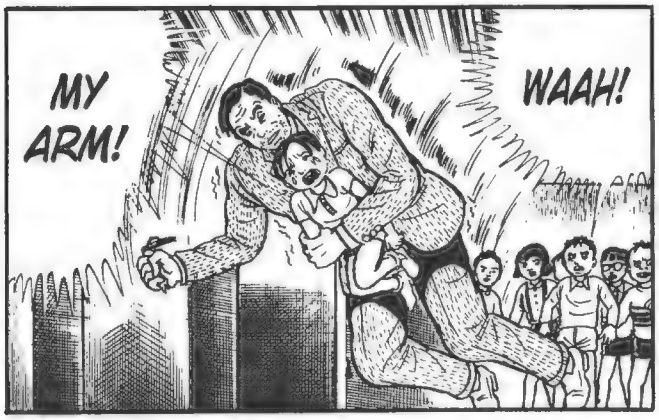

LISTEN UP, ALL OF YOU!
LOOK, THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT!!
WE'RE GOING TO FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENED!
CAN YOU ALL HEAR ME!?
SO DON'T PANIC! I WANT ALL OF YOU TO BEHAVE!

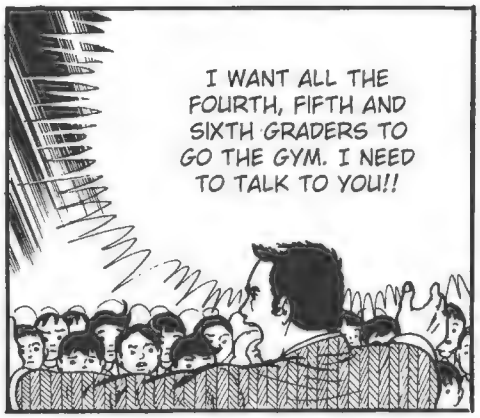

IF YOU KIDS IN THE UPPER GRADES DON'T CALM DOWN, WHAT ARE THE YOUNGER KIDS GOING TO DO!?


LOOK AT THE FIRST GRADERS! CAN'T YOU SEE HOW SCARED THEY ARE?


...AND THIRD GRADERS ARE TERRIFIED TOO!

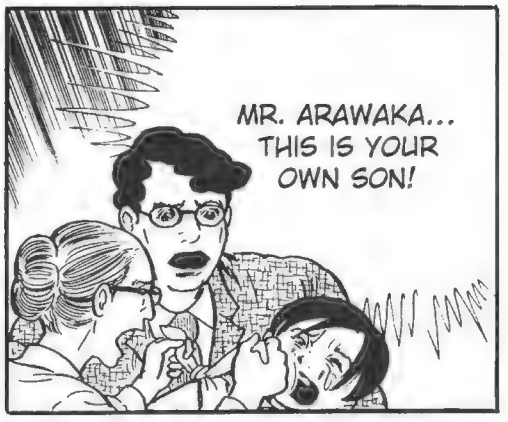

THE SECOND GRADERS...


MY ARM!
WAAH!


I WANT ALL THE FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADERS TO GO THE GYM. I NEED TO TALK TO YOU!!

MY ARM HURTS!
IT HURTS !!

T-TAKE HIM TO THE NURSE'S OFFICE!
IT HURTS!


MR. ARAWAKA... THIS IS YOUR OWN SON!

DAD, IT HURTS!
F-FORGIVE ME, KAZUHIRO!!

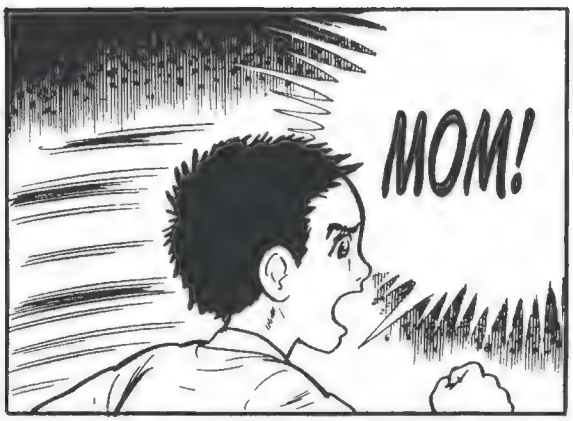
I HAD TO DO IT TO HIM! IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE THEM LISTEN!
THAT'S RIGHT. PLEASE TREAT HIM!

Y-YES SIR.
TAKAMATSU! YOU GO TO THE GYM TOO. HURRY!!

EVERYONE GO TO THE GYM!! WE'LL FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED!

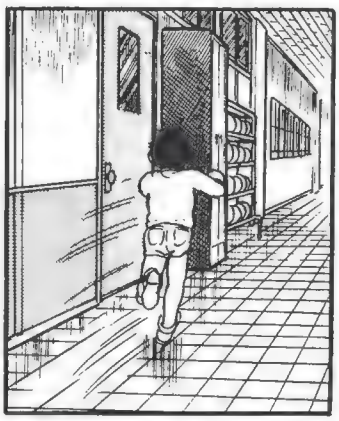
PLEASE, LET ME MAKE A PHONE CALL!! PLEASE!!

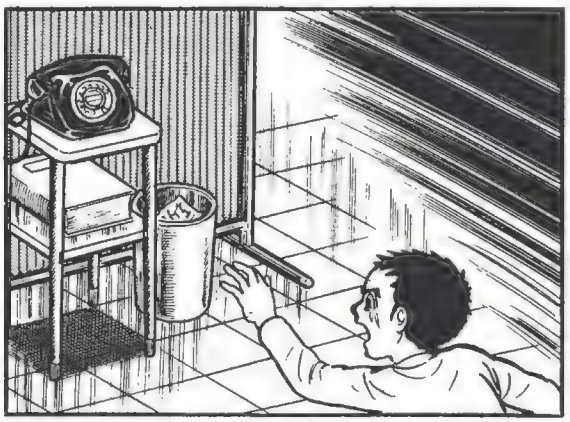
SIR!! WHY DON'T WE CHECK THE TV TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED? WE COULD ALSO TRY CALLING ON THE PHONE...

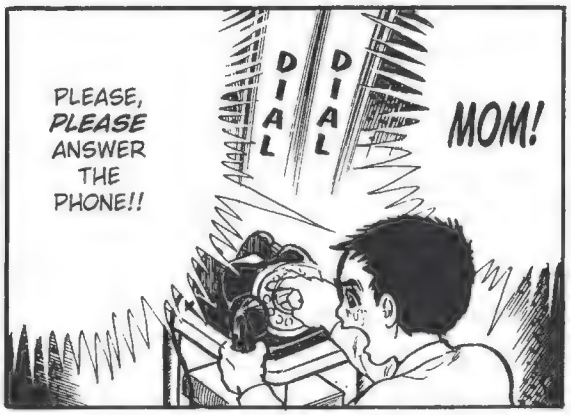

MOM!

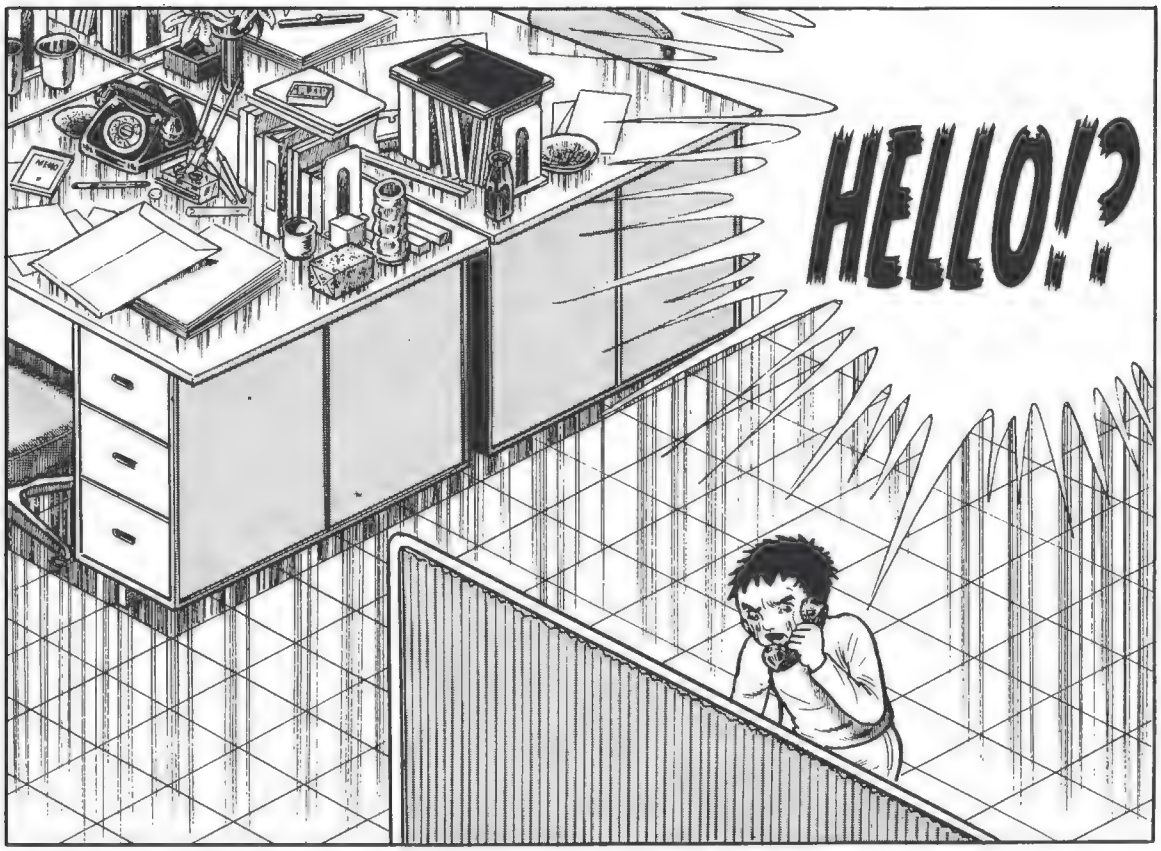
TAKAMATSU!
WAIT!

GEBA

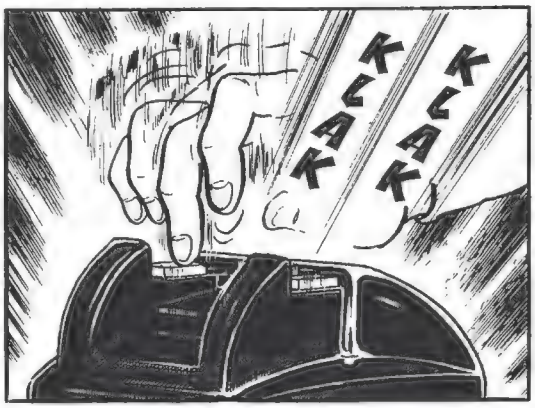





PLEASE, *PLEASE* ANSWER THE PHONE!!
DIAL
DIAL
MOM!


HELLO!?

HELLO!

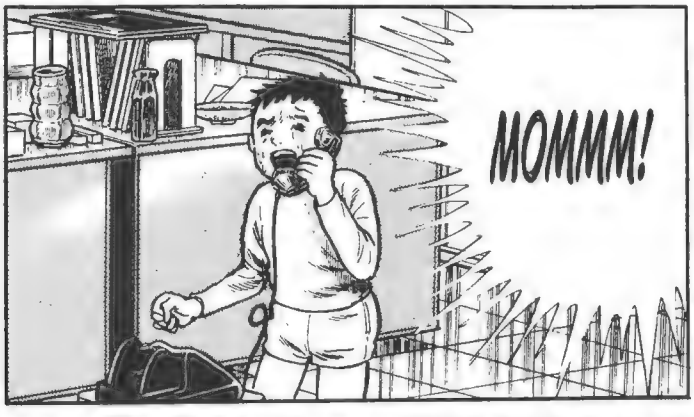

KLAK
KLAK

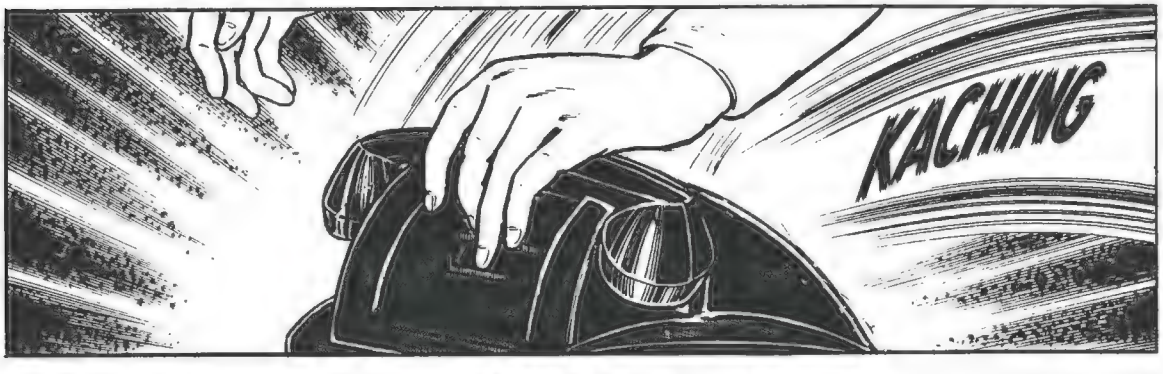
MOM?!
HELLO, MOM?

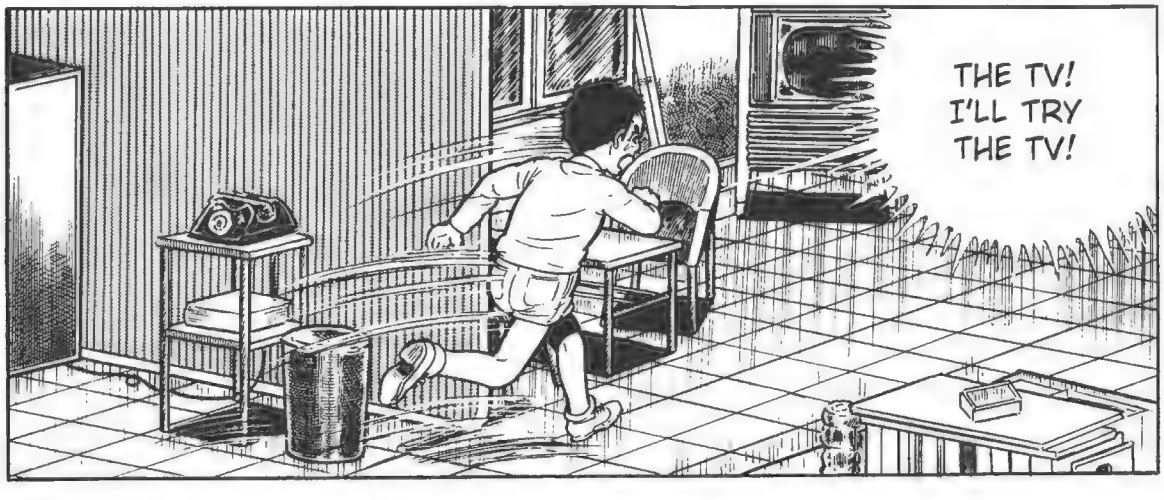
MOM!! HELLO!?
WHY!? WHY ISN'T THERE ANY SOUND!?
RRGH!!
KNIK
MOM!
DIAL
DIAL
DIAL

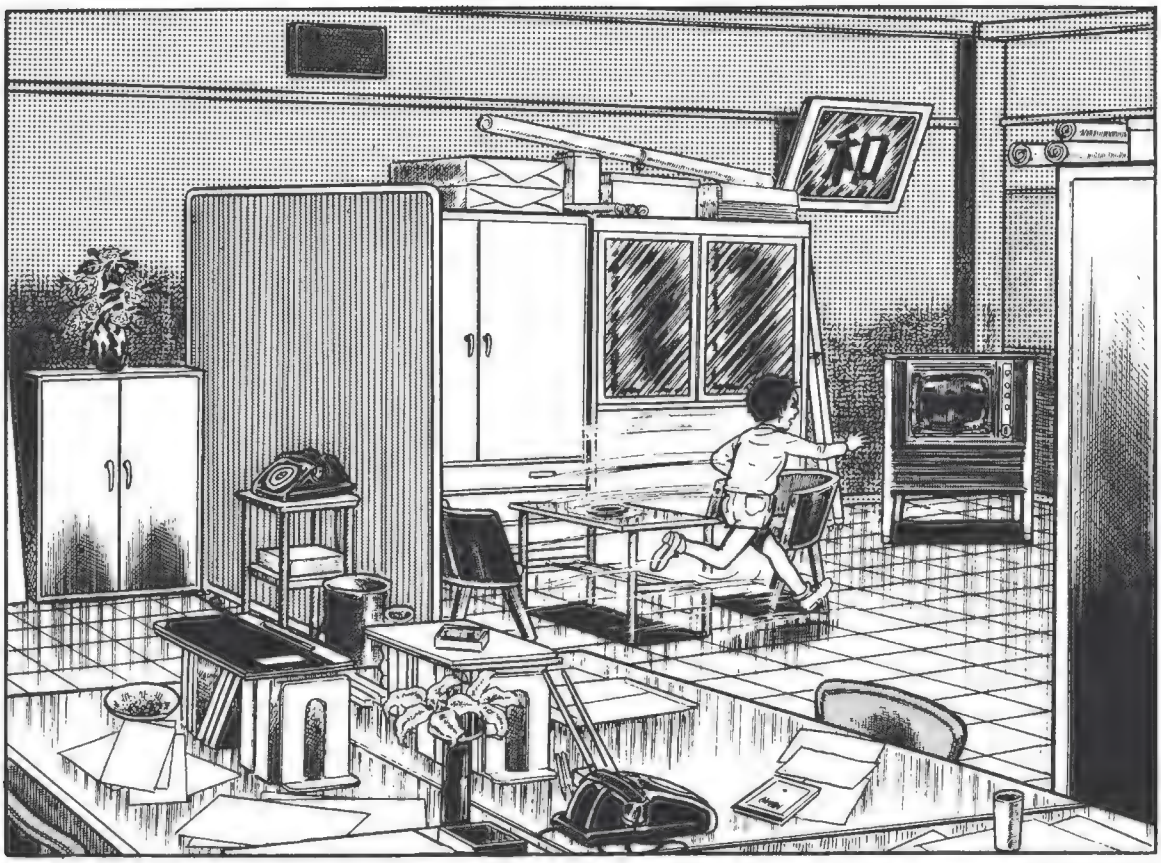
WHAT'S GOING ON?

MOM, WHY WON'T YOU ANSWER THE PHONE!?

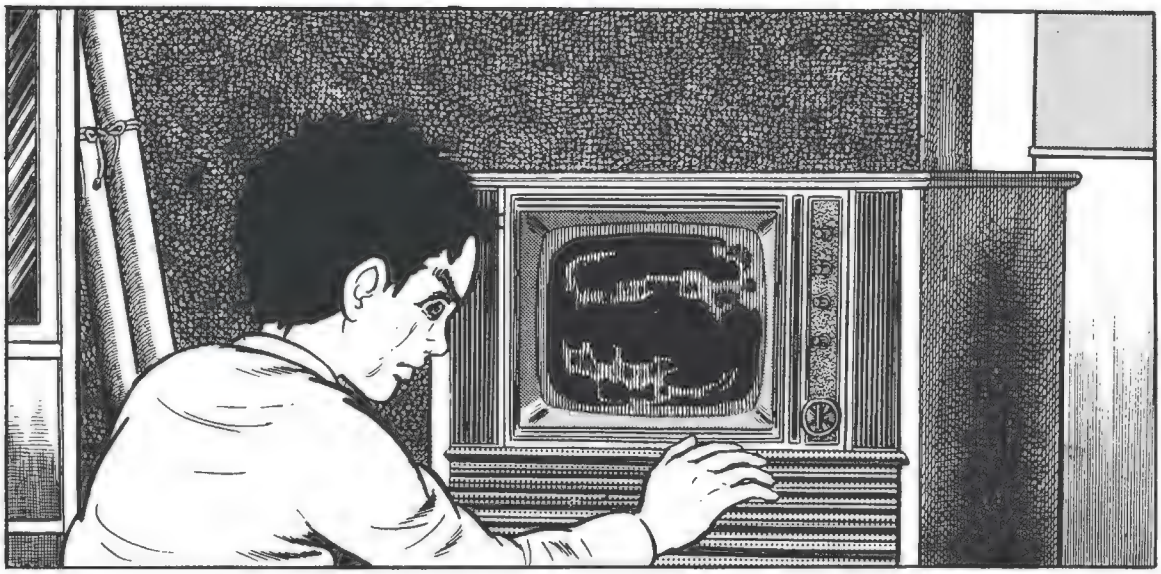

MOMMM!


KACHING


THE TV! I'LL TRY THE TV!

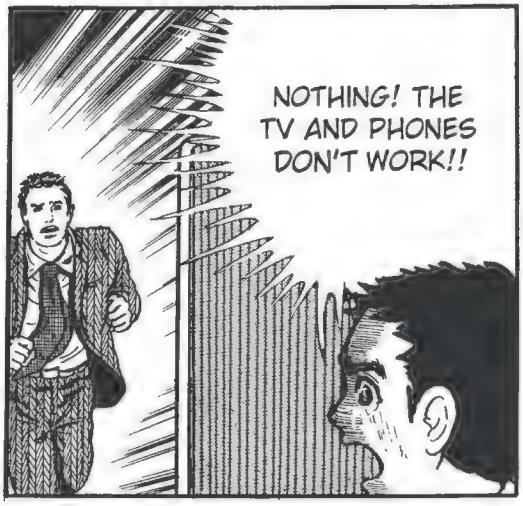


VIP

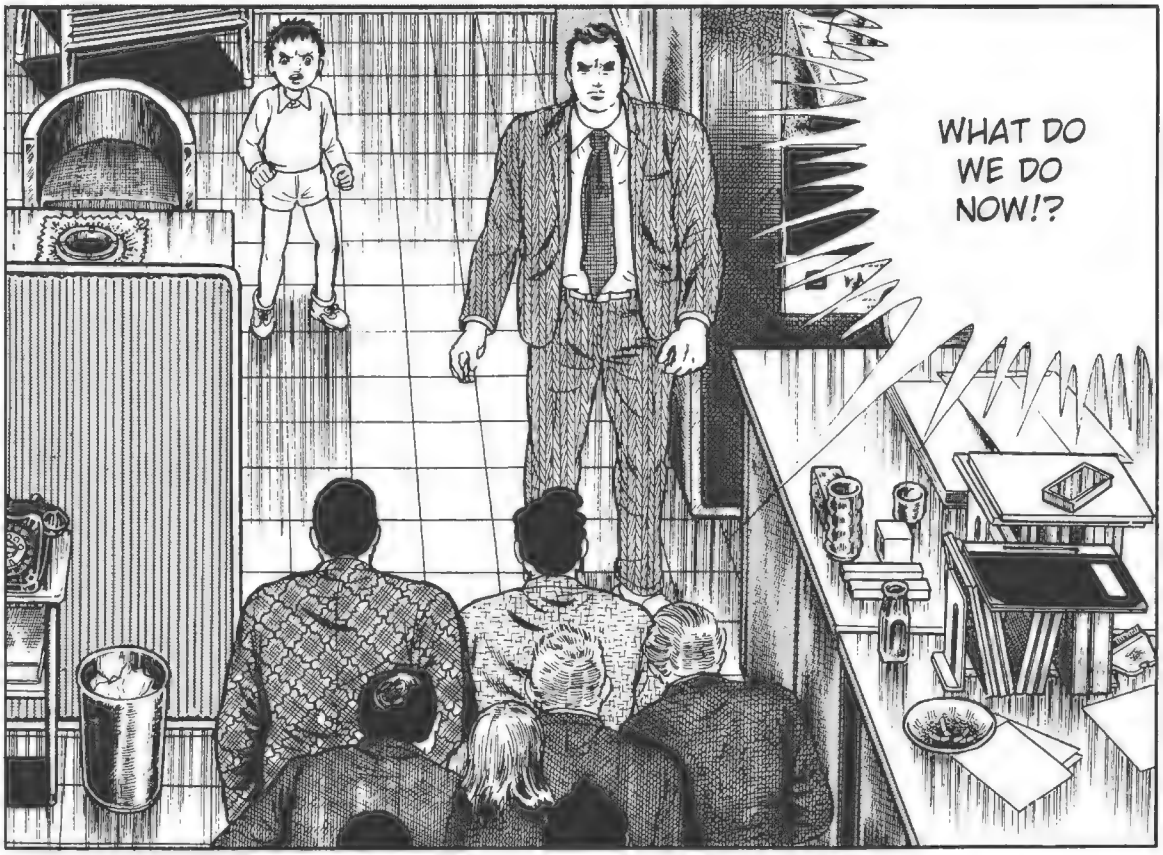


CHAPTER 4:

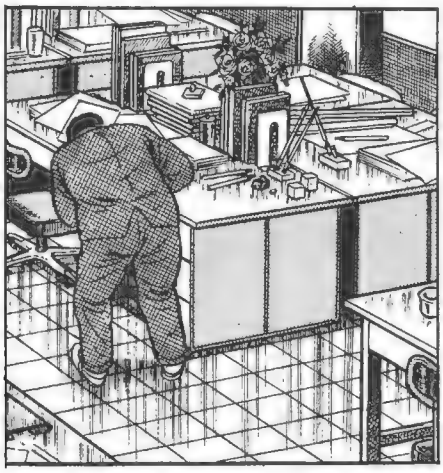
THE CLOSED WORLD



CHAK
NO! NOTHING!
DID YOU GET ANYTHING!?
LOOK. WE HAVE NO ELECTRICITY!!
WHAT?! WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

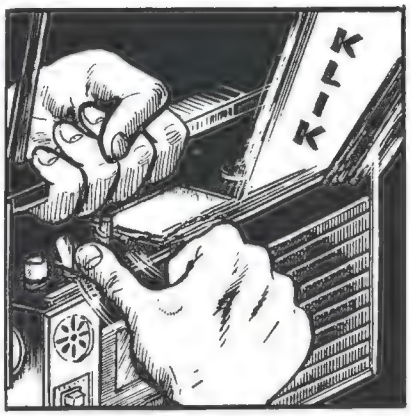

WHAT DO WE DO NOW!?

WHAT!?
H-HOLD ON! I HAVE A HANDHELD RADIO!!



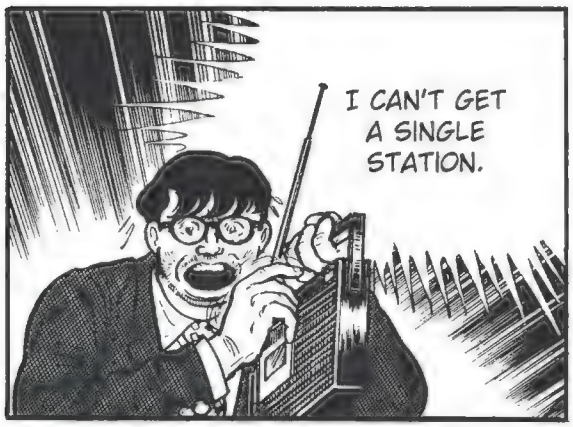
I SHOULD GET SOME EMERGENCY BROADCAST!!
IT'S IN MY SUIT-CASE!!

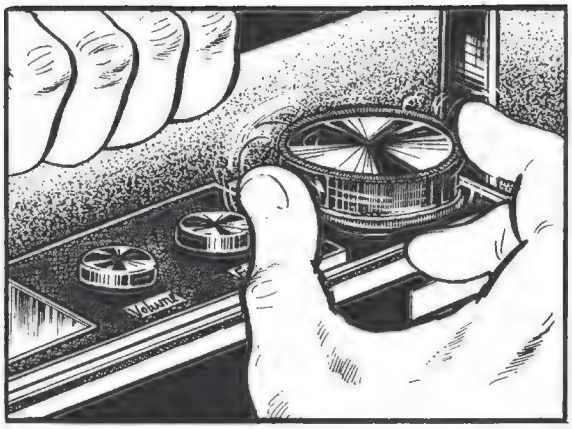
H-HERE IT IS!


KLIK

I JUST CHANGED THEM THIS MORNING!
NO...

WHAT'S WRONG? MAYBE THE BATTERIES ARE DEAD!!


I CAN'T GET A SINGLE STATION.


Volume

THIS RADIO'S POWERFUL ENOUGH TO RECEIVE BROADCASTS FROM UP NORTH.
WH-WHAT'S THAT!?

I'LL SWITCH IT OVER TO SHORT WAVE PROGRAMMING!!
KLIK
TH-THAT CAN'T BE!!

I CAN'T EVEN GET ANYTHING ON THE SHORT WAVE!
NOTHING!

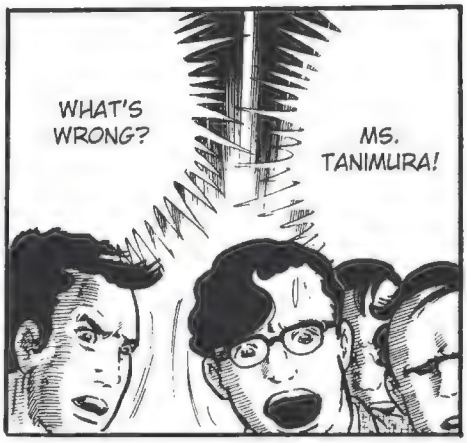
I-I DON'T THINK SO...!
MAYBE IT'S BROKEN!?

RIGHT BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE I WAS LISTENING TO A REPORT ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF SMOG ON CHILDREN!!

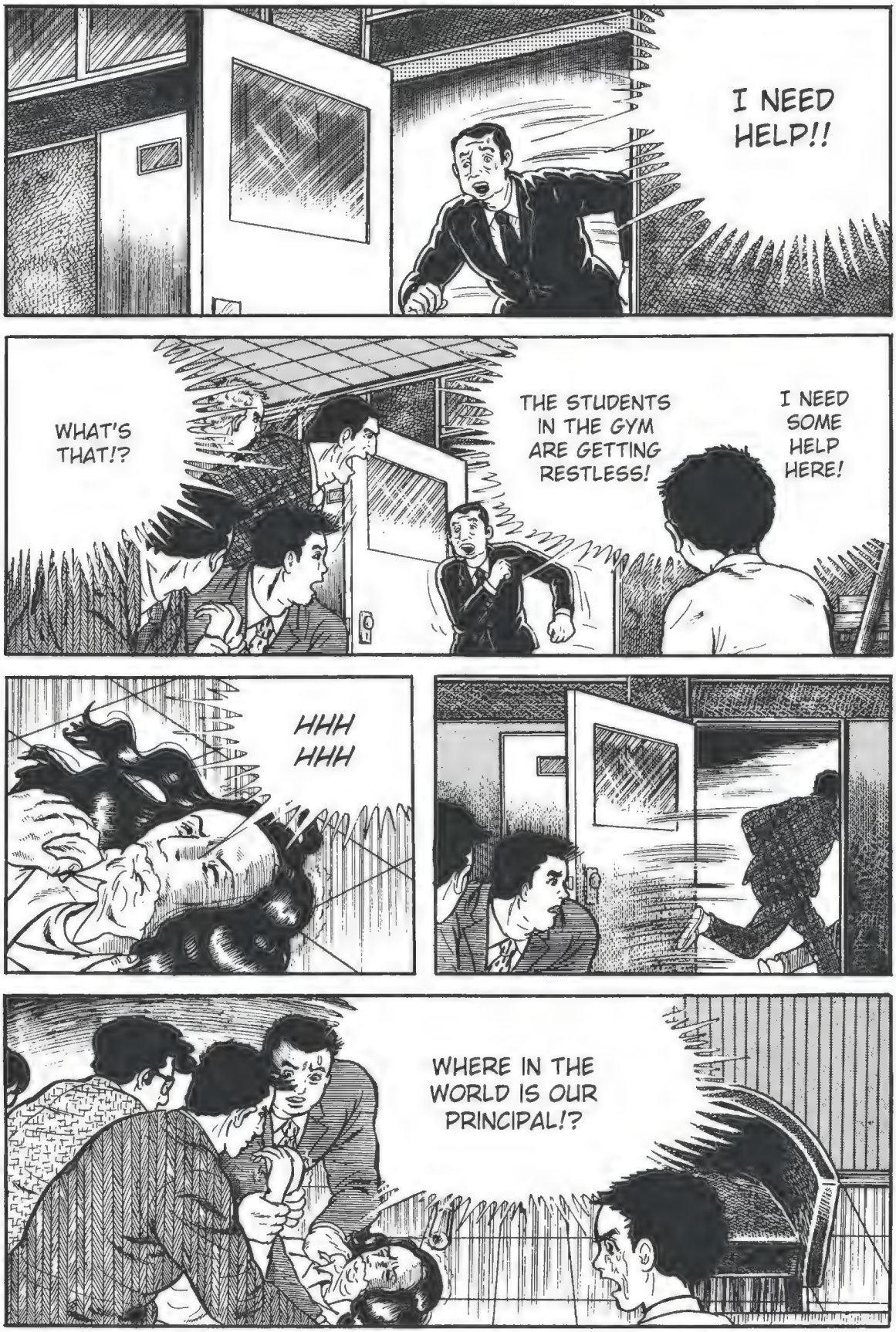
NNRRH! NNHH...

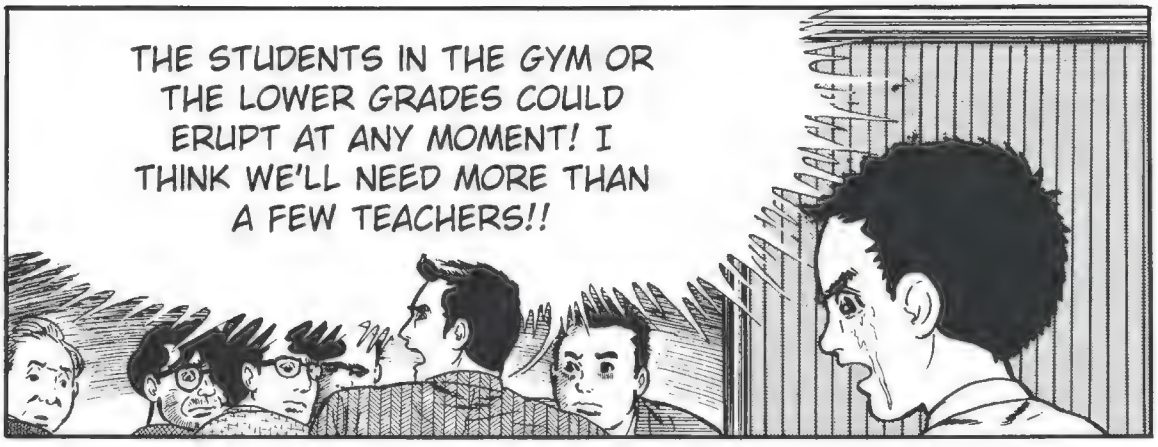
NNNHH...!

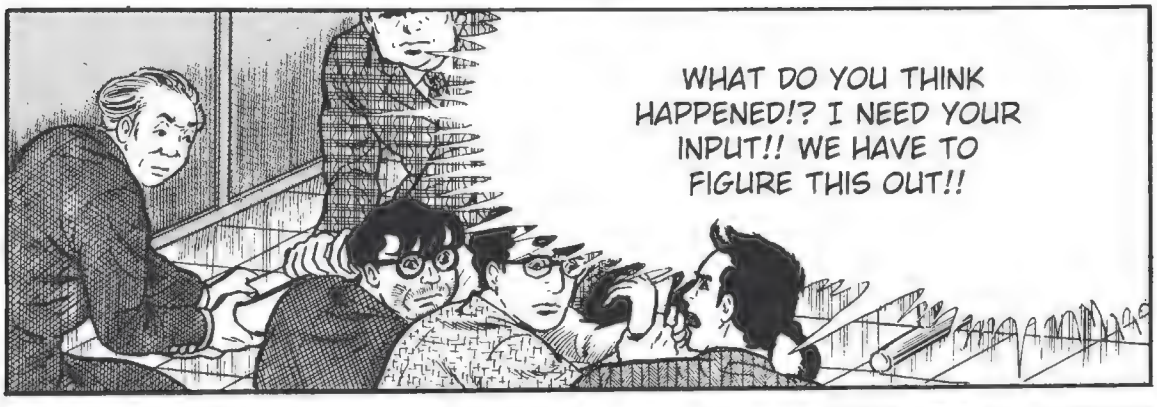
WHUDD


WHAT'S WRONG?
MS. TANIMURA!

I-I NEED A HAND-KERCHIEF!! I HAVE TO MAKE SURE SHE DOESN'T SWALLOW HER TONGUE!! SOMEONE BRING ME HER MEDICATION!!
SHE'S HAVING ONE OF HER SEIZURES!! HOLD HER DOWN.
MMFF
URR
MS. TANIMURA! IT'LL BE OKAY!
HUFF HUFF
HUFF HUFF


I NEED HELP!!
WHAT'S THAT!?
THE STUDENTS IN THE GYM ARE GETTING RESTLESS!
I NEED SOME HELP HERE!
HHH HHH
WHERE IN THE WORLD IS OUR PRINCIPAL!?


THE STUDENTS IN THE GYM OR THE LOWER GRADES COULD ERUPT AT ANY MOMENT! I THINK WE'LL NEED MORE THAN A FEW TEACHERS!!


WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED!? I NEED YOUR INPUT!! WE HAVE TO FIGURE THIS OUT!!

ASHES!?

BUT ONE THING WE KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT EVERYTHING AROUND US HAS BEEN REDUCED TO ASHES!!
I DON'T KNOW.

NOT A SINGLE BUILDING, PERSON OR CAR...NOT EVEN A TREE OR A BLADE OF GRASS!
WHAT ELSE COULD HAVE HAPPENED? HOW ELSE CAN YOU DESCRIBE WHAT'S OUT THERE?

IT CAN'T BE...!!

IT CAN'T BE...
TH-THEN...!!

BUT THEN WHY ARE WE STILL ALIVE?

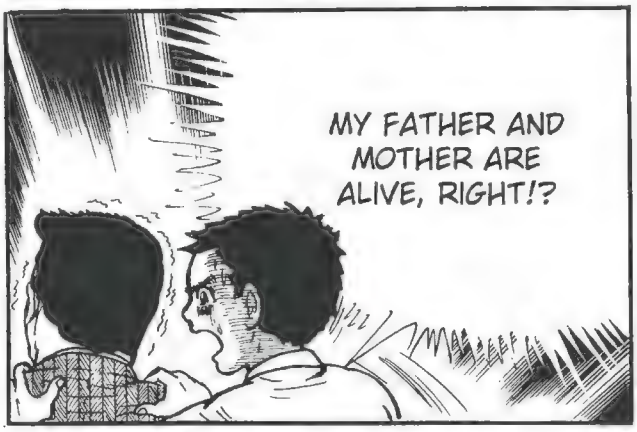
I DON'T KNOW! BUT WE ARE!

IT'S TOO DANGEROUS FOR US TO STEP OUTSIDE THIS SCHOOL!!

WHAT'S GOING ON? PLEASE TELL ME!!

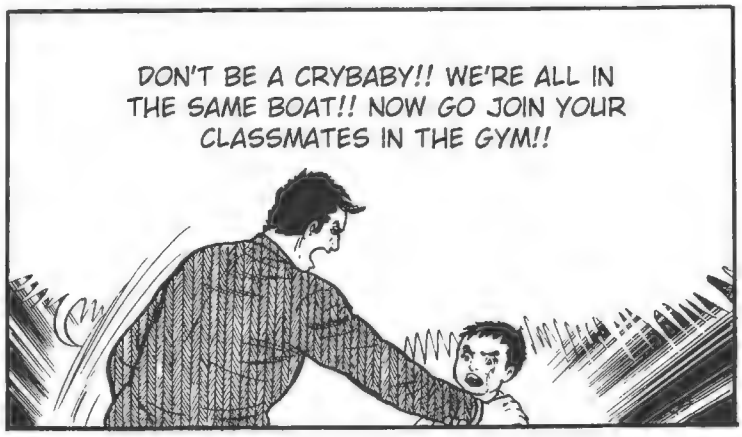
MR. WAKAHARA!

SHUT UP, SHO!!


MY FATHER AND MOTHER ARE ALIVE, RIGHT!?

LISTEN-- YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER ARE GONE!!

CHUD


DON'T BE A CRYBABY!! WE'RE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT!! NOW GO JOIN YOUR CLASSMATES IN THE GYM!!

AH!!

SIR! WH-WHAT HAPPENED ?!

I-I WAS ATTACKED !!

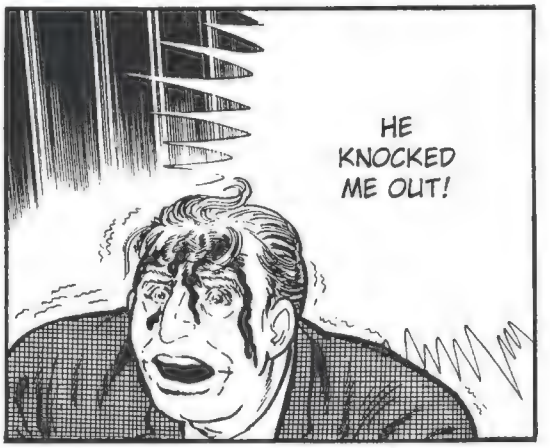
WHO HURT YOU!?
WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SIR?

WE HAVE AN EMERGENCY!!

IT WAS A BURGLAR!!
I'M FINE NOW, BUT...I'M SO SORRY!!

IT WAS A YOUNG MAN! HE SNEAKED INTO MY OFFICE...AND STOLE ALL THE TEACHERS' PAY ENVELOPES!

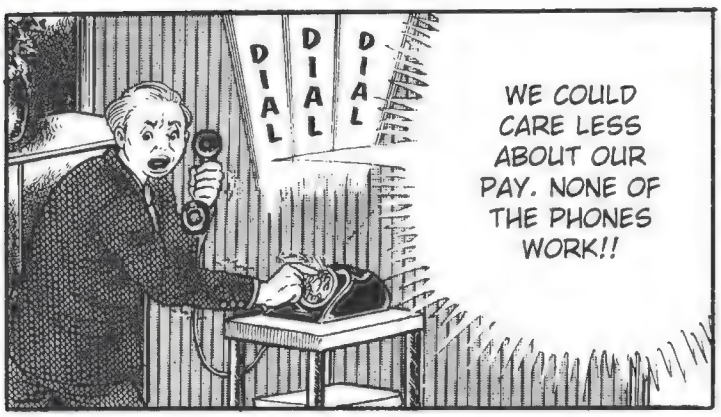
WE HAVE TO CALL THE POLICE!
THE EMERGENCY ALARM AND PHONES DON'T WORK!! TH-THE BURGLAR MUST HAVE CUT THEM OFF!


HE KNOCKED ME OUT!

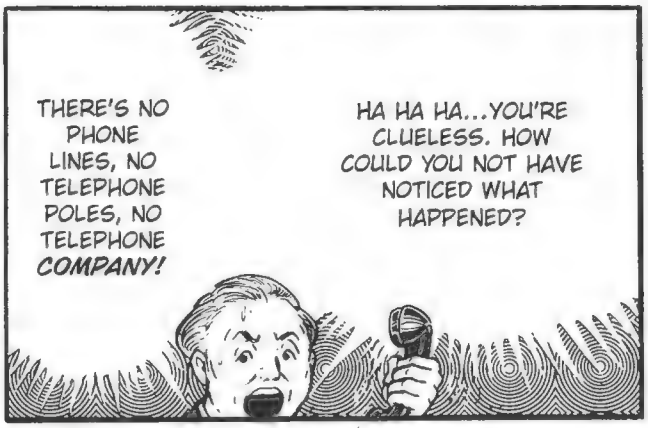
SO... YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON!?
HA HA HA HA!!
HA HA HA

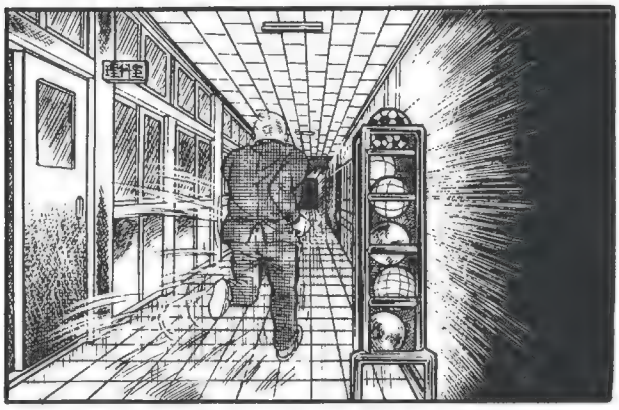
HA HA HA
M-MR. SAKURA!

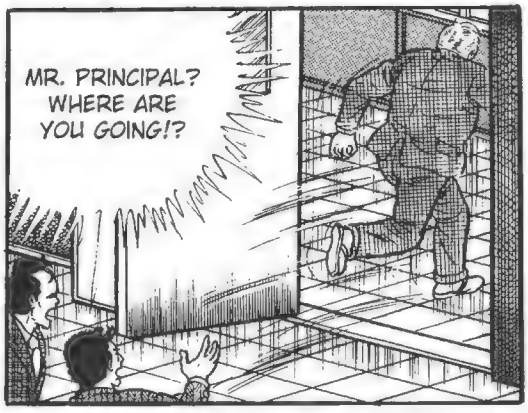
THE ALARMS AND THE PHONES ARE DEAD. WE JUST CHECKED THEM!!
YOU HAVEN'T LOOKED OUTSIDE!? THERE'S NO POLICE!!

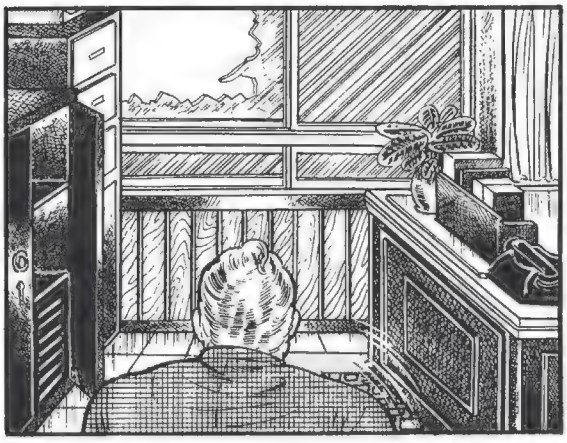

DIAL
DIAL
DIAL
WE COULD CARE LESS ABOUT OUR PAY. NONE OF THE PHONES WORK!!

WHAT'S THAT!?


THERE'S NO PHONE LINES, NO TELEPHONE POLES, NO TELEPHONE *COMPANY!*
HA HA HA...YOU'RE CLUELESS. HOW COULD YOU NOT HAVE NOTICED WHAT HAPPENED?

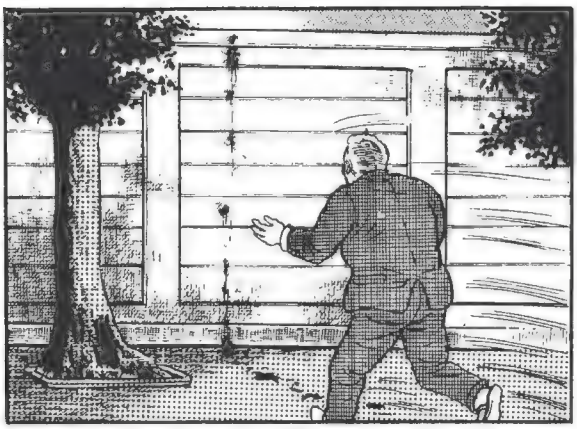


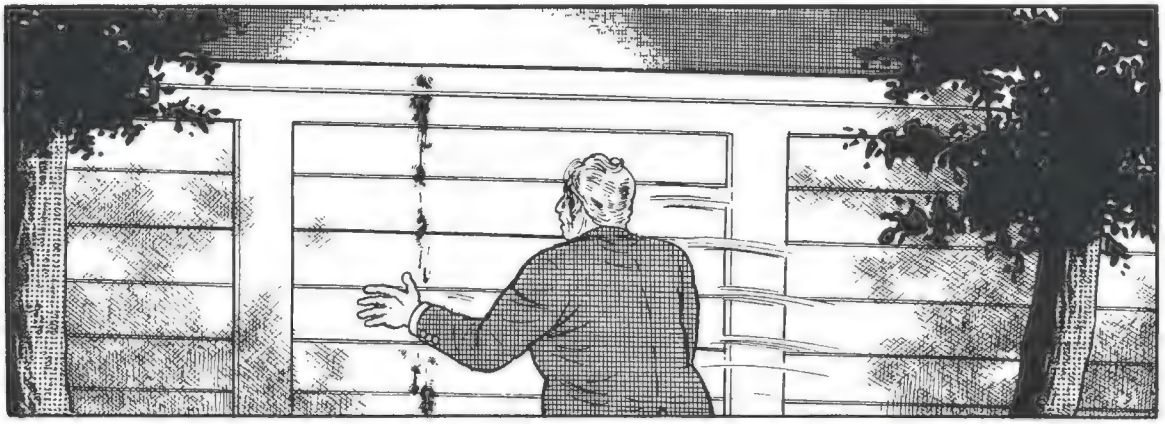

MR. PRINCIPAL? WHERE ARE YOU GOING!?

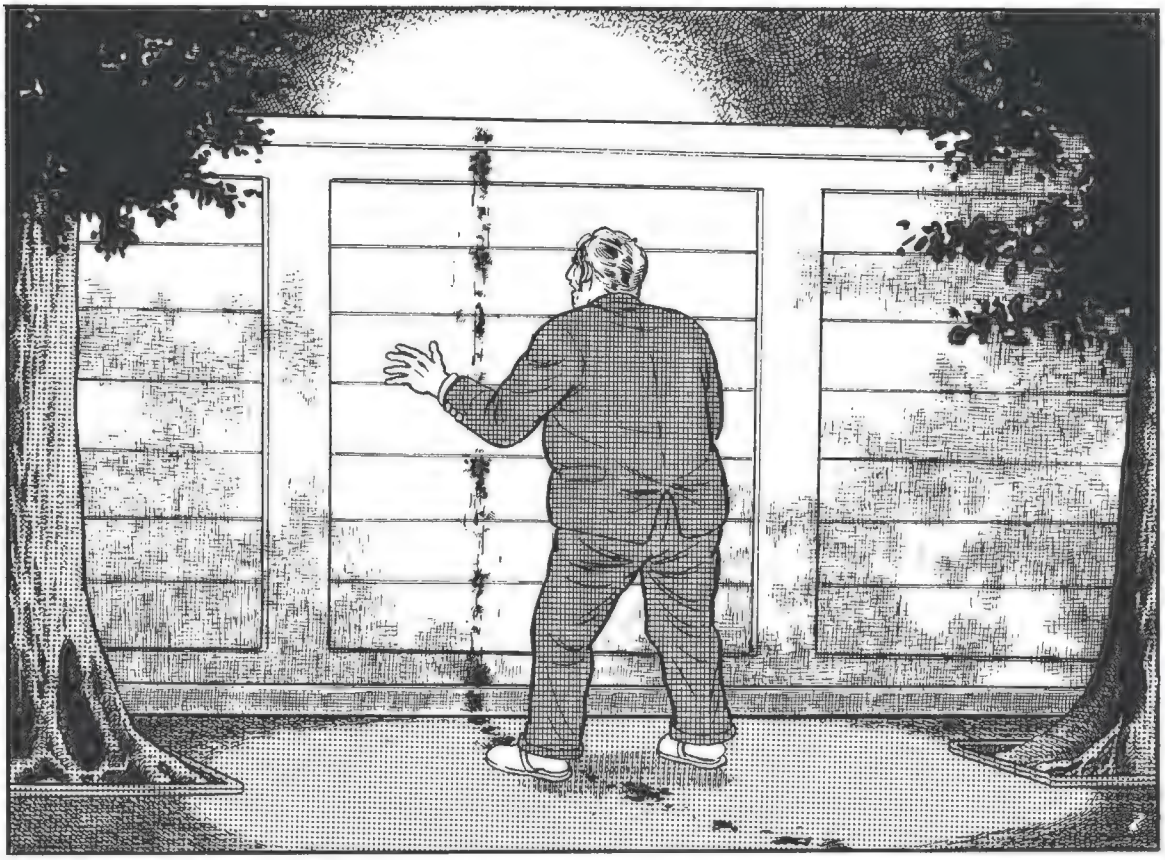


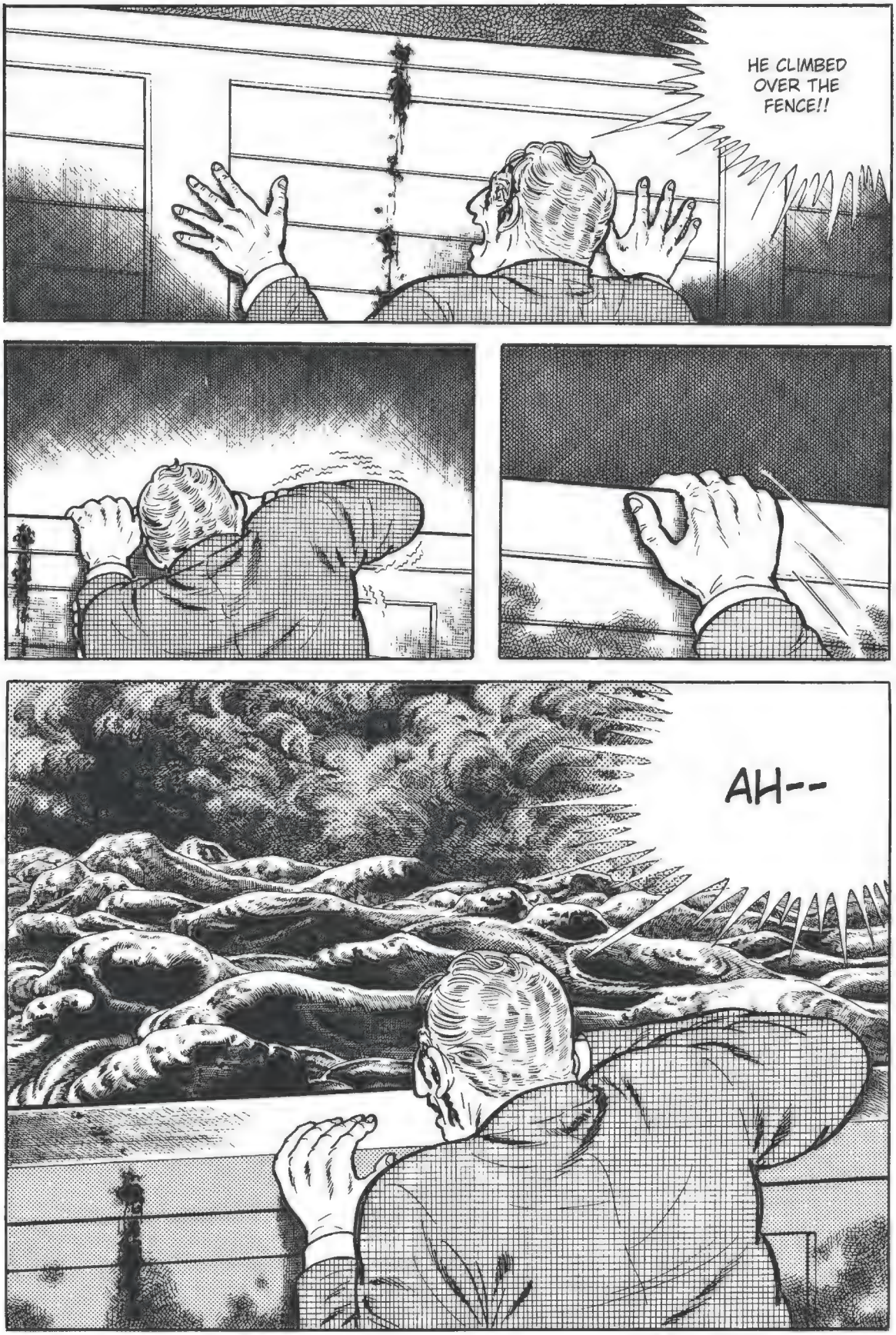
校長室

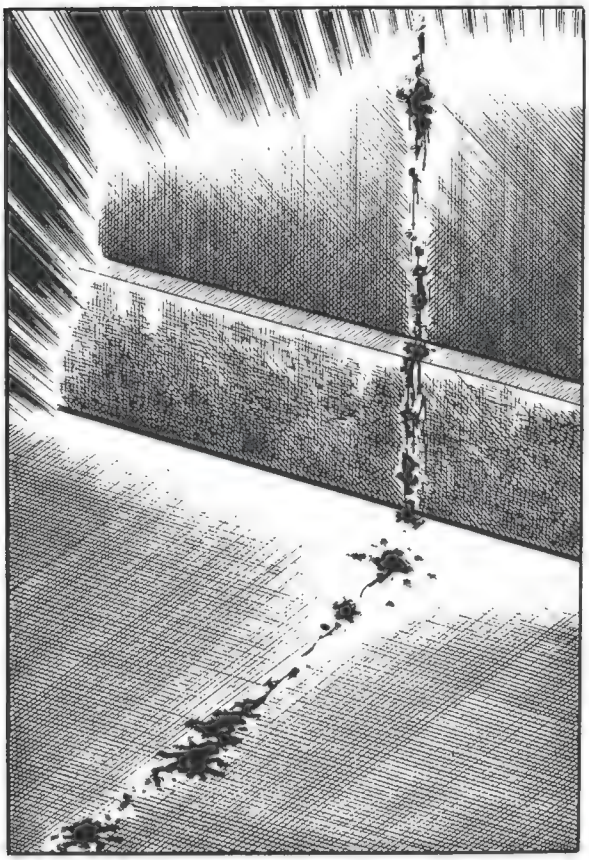
HE GOT OUT THROUGH THE WINDOW...BUT HE CUT HIMSELF WHEN HE BROKE THE GLASS!
BLOOD !!

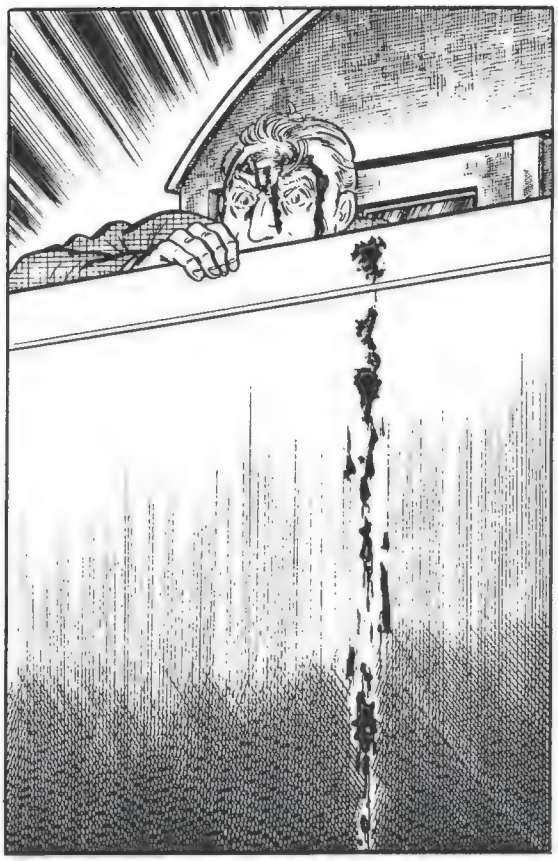


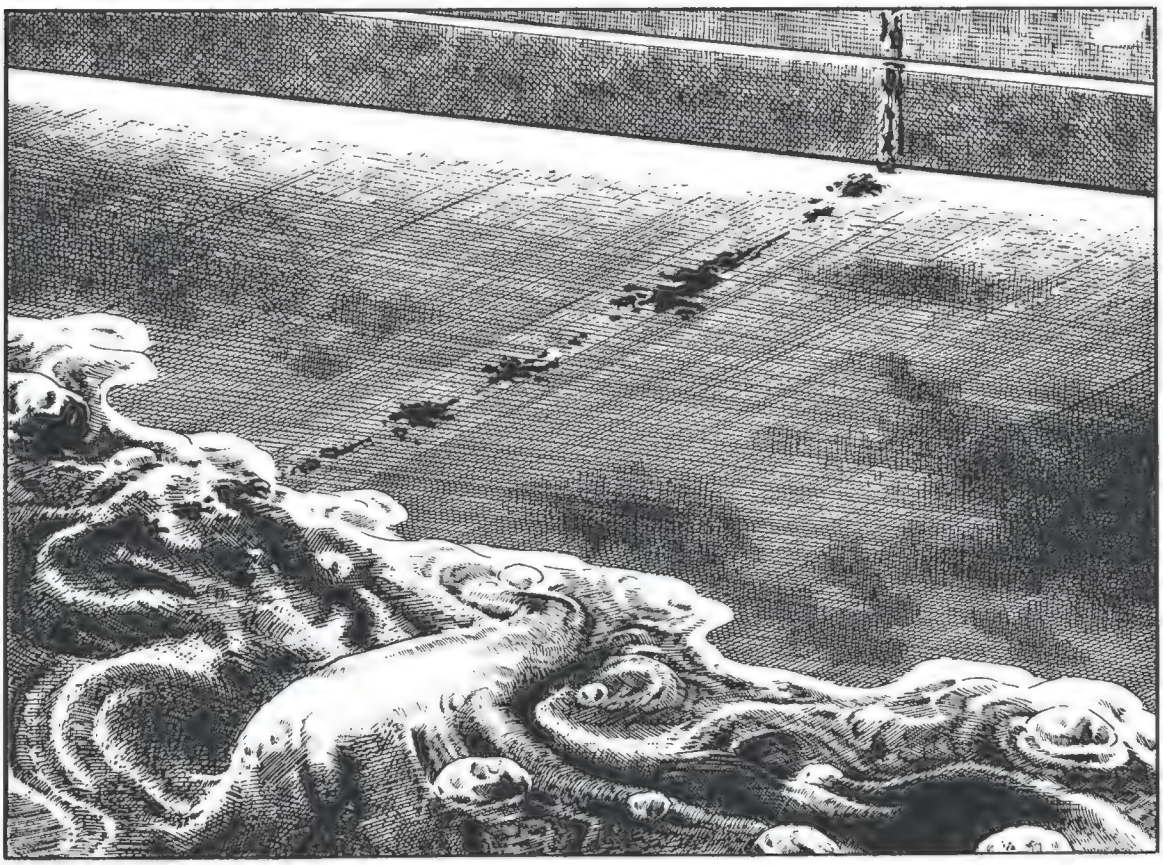


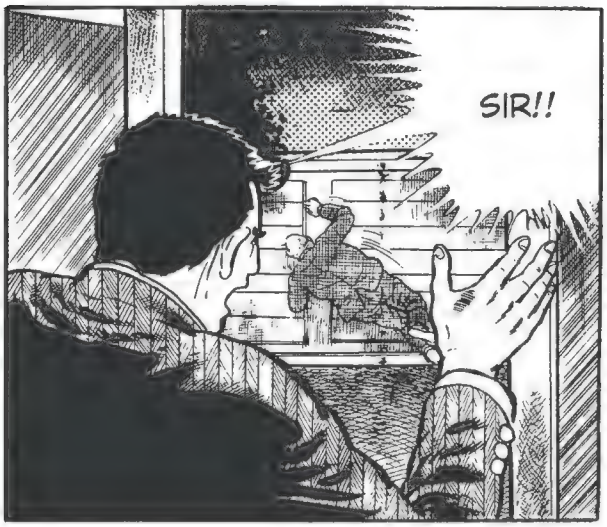


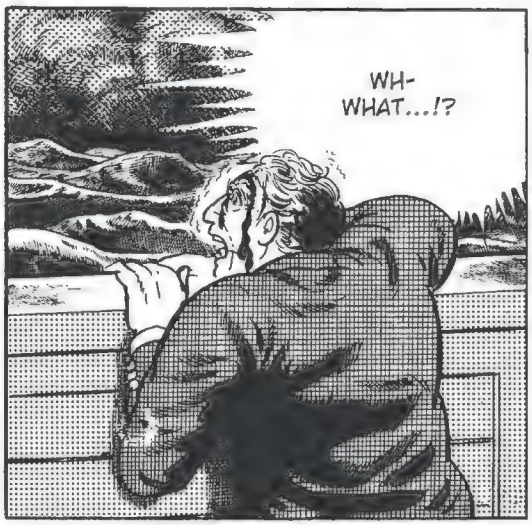

HE CLIMBED OVER THE FENCE!!
AH--



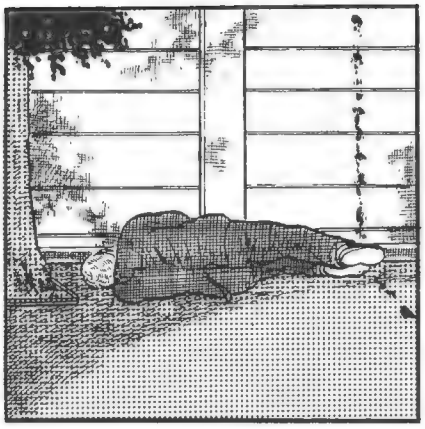




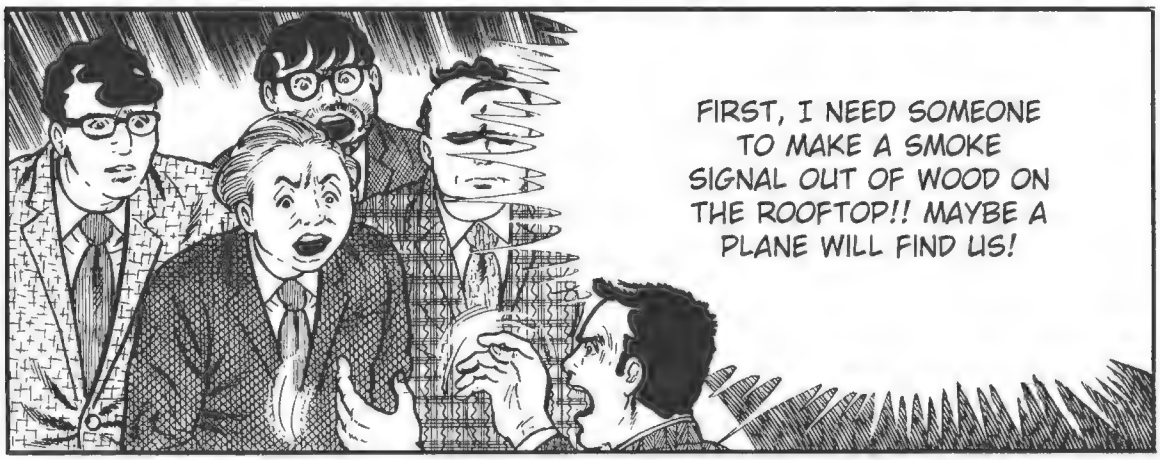

SIR!!

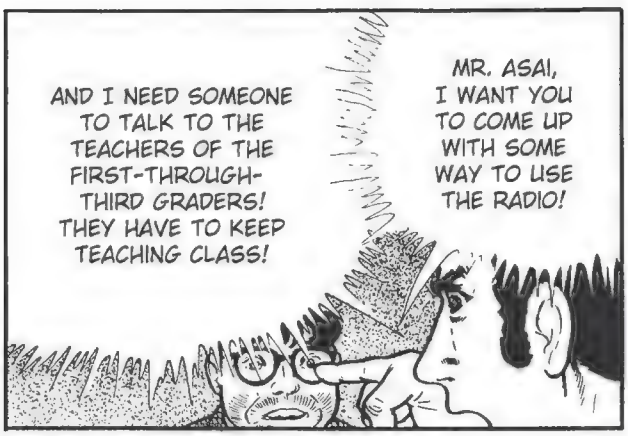

WH-
WHAT...!?

SIR!!



WE NEED TO SPLIT INTO GROUPS! WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS IN AN ORDERLY FASHION...NOT JUST TO KEEP THE STUDENTS FROM PANICKING, BUT TO KEEP *OURSELVES* FROM CRACKING UP TOO!

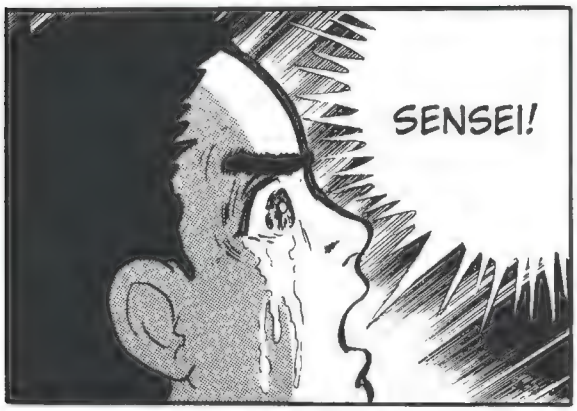

FIRST, I NEED SOMEONE TO MAKE A SMOKE SIGNAL OUT OF WOOD ON THE ROOFTOP!! MAYBE A PLANE WILL FIND US!

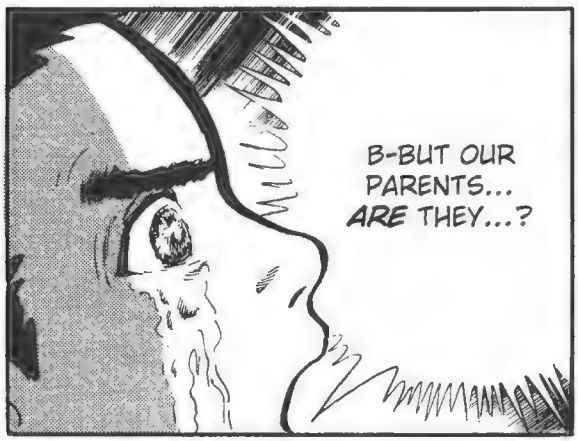

AND I NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO THE TEACHERS OF THE FIRST-THROUGH-THIRD GRADERS! THEY HAVE TO KEEP TEACHING CLASS!
MR. ASAI, I WANT YOU TO COME UP WITH SOME WAY TO USE THE RADIO!

WE ALSO NEED TO CHECK THE GAS AND WATER!

TAKAMATSU, YOU GO BACK TO THE GYM!!

I'LL CHECK TO SEE IF IT'S SAFE TO GO OUTSIDE!!


SENSEI!

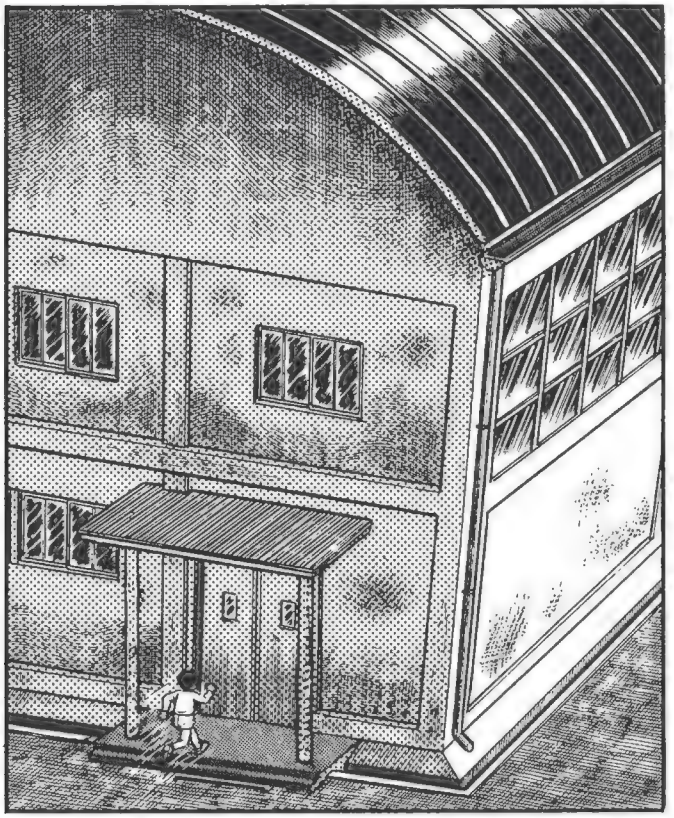

B-BUT OUR PARENTS... *ARE* THEY...?

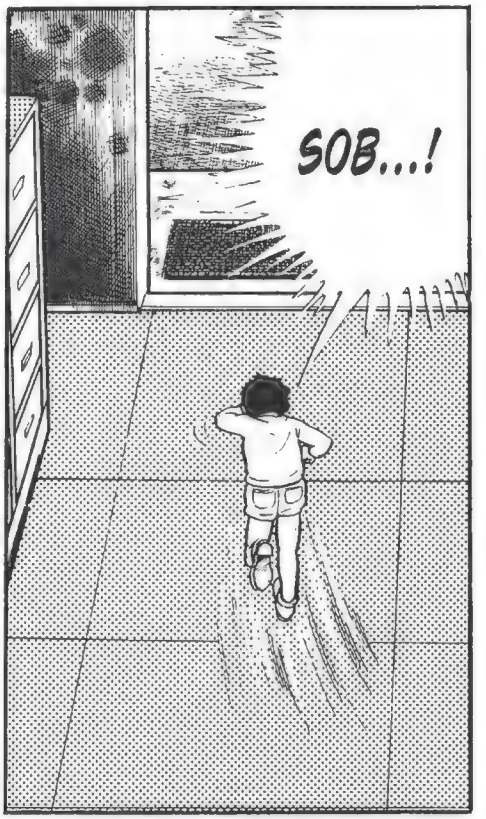
I WANT YOU TO TELL THEM THAT THEIR PARENTS ARE ALIVE!!

YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU DON'T, RIGHT!!
I NEED YOU TO LIE!!
ALL RIGHT?
SAY IT LIKE YOU BELIEVE IT!
TELL THEM THAT WHEN YOU CALLED YOUR MOTHER, SHE ANSWERED YOU!
Y-YES!!
ALL RIGHT?
TUMP
THEN GO!

HOW CAN I?!
B-BUT I CAN'T LIE LIKE THAT!!

以上
歯をよくみがきましょう




SOB...!

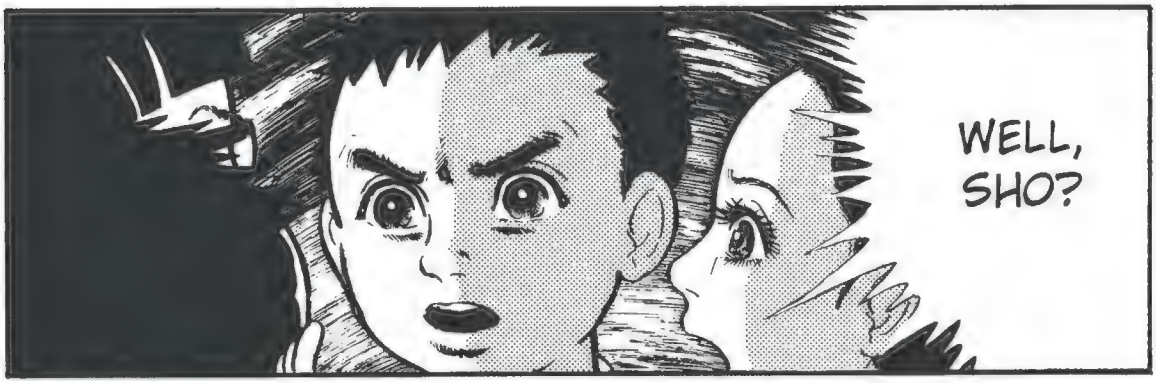
KREEK

KREEK

SHO!!
CHUD
S-SO DID YOU REACH ANYONE!?
WE'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR YOU!!
WELL!? YOU CALLED, RIGHT!?
M-MY MOM ANSWERED THE PHONE.
YOU DID!?
...YES.

YEAH!!
A-AND WHAT DID SHE SAY!?
HURRAY!!
YOUR MOM!!
AND THEN?
AND THEN?
SHE SAID...SHE SAID SHE WAS FINE...
A-AND THEN?
I-I ASKED HER HOW SHE WAS...
TELL US!!
WHAT ELSE DID SHE SAY!?

WHAT ELSE DID YOU TALK ABOUT!?


WELL, SHO?

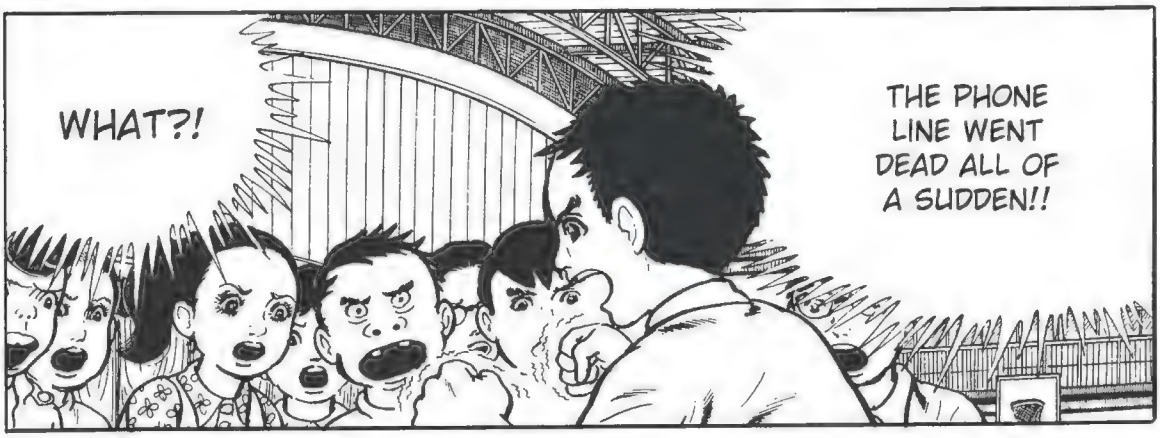
I ASKED HER WHERE SHE WAS...

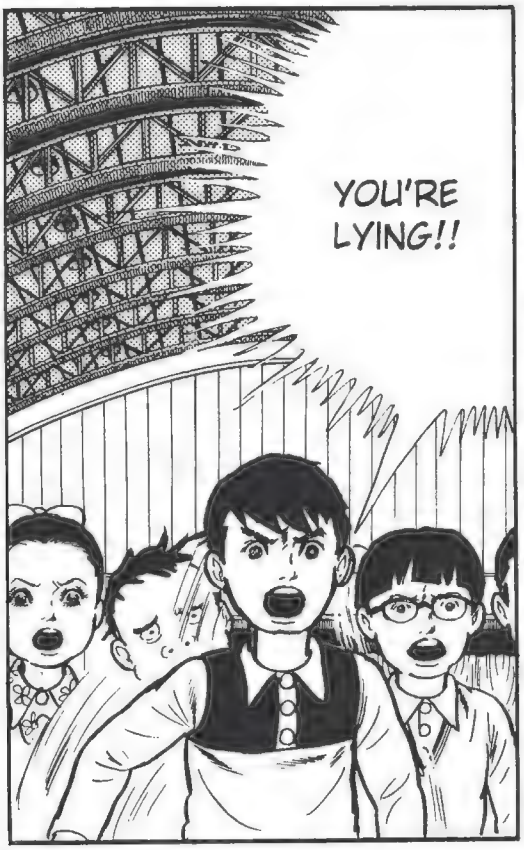
D-DID SHE SAY WHERE SHE WAS?

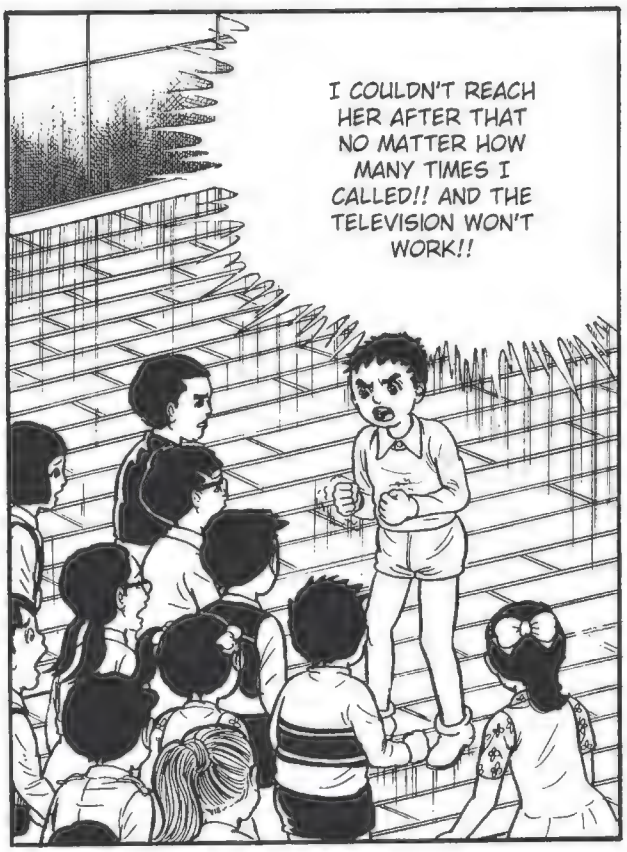
OOOH!

WH-WHAT!?
WHAT!?
...SHE'S AT HOME!
WHAT DID SHE SAY!?
HEY, WAS SHE WORRIED ABOUT US?
SH-SHE WAS...REALLY WORRIED ABOUT US...
WHAT DID YOUR MOM SAY!?
DID SHE SAY WHAT HAPPENED?

I-I DON'T KNOW!!


WHAT?!
THE PHONE LINE WENT DEAD ALL OF A SUDDEN!!


YOU'RE LYING!!


I COULDN'T REACH HER AFTER THAT NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I CALLED!! AND THE TELEVISION WON'T WORK!!

YOU'RE FULL OF IT. THE PHONE DIDN'T WORK AT ALL!! YOU'RE LYING ABOUT REACHING YOUR MOM!!
OUR PARENTS ARE ALL DEAD!!
I AM NOT!!
THERE'S NOTHING OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL!
THE PHONE NEVER WORKED!! YOU LIAR!!
I'M NOT LYING!!
I-I'M TELLING THE TRUTH!!

HEY!!
OH, YES YOU ARE!!

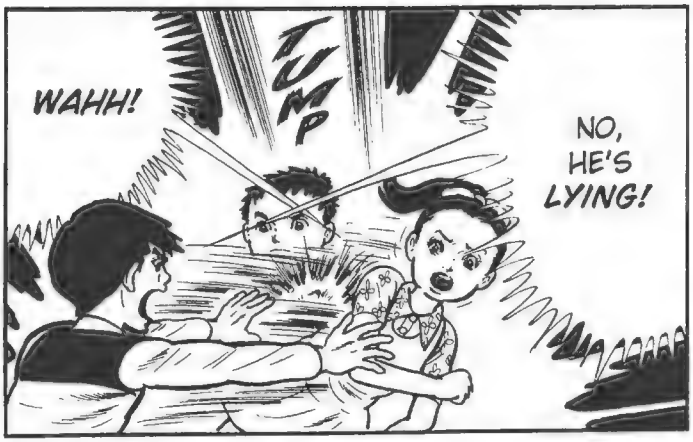
STOP IT!!

THOK
YOU LIAR!!

HE NEVER LIES!! I'M SURE HE'S TELLING US THE TRUTH!!
SHO WOULDN'T LIE!

I'M SURE HE REALLY REACHED HIS MOTHER!!

STOP IT, YOU TWO!

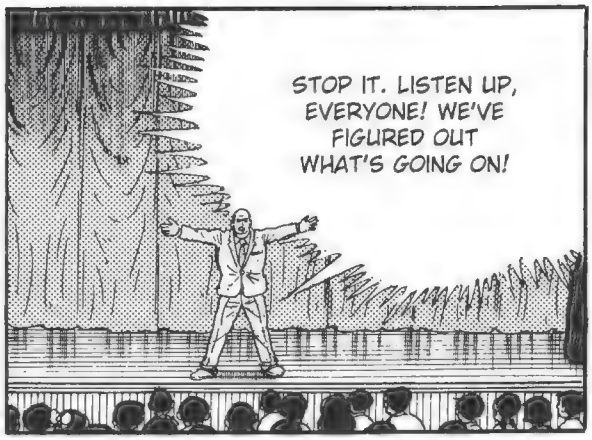

WAHH!
TUMP
NO, HE'S LYING!

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO US? WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR MOTHER!?
THOK
THOK
YOU'RE LYING! YOU BETTER TELL THE TRUTH!

WHISPER WHISPER

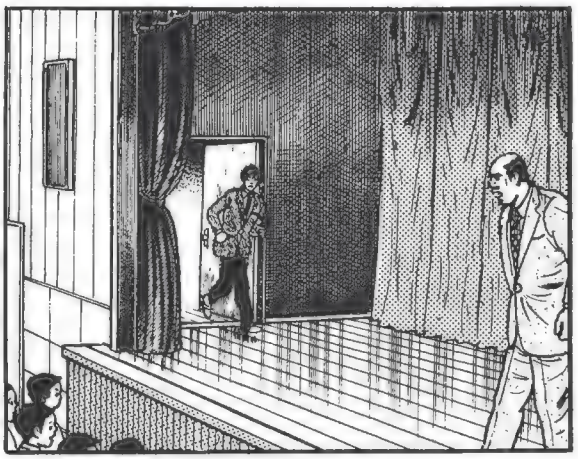
STOP IT!!
TELL THE TRUTH!!

WHAT!?


STOP IT. LISTEN UP, EVERYONE! WE'VE FIGURED OUT WHAT'S GOING ON!

MR. OTSUKA, THE LEADER OF THE BROADCASTING CLUB, WILL EXPLAIN!!

LISTEN, ALL OF YOU!



YOU'RE IN THE UPPER GRADES, BUT YOU'RE MUCH YOUNGER THAN WE ARE. YOUR POWERS OF THE IMAGINATION SHOULD HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON!
THE PRINCIPAL IS ILL SO I'LL HAVE TO EXPLAIN!!
SOMETHING UNBELIEVABLE HAS HAPPENED TO US!!
WE HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA HOW IT HAPPENED!!

...IT SEEMS WE'VE BEEN TELEPORTED TO AN UNKNOWN AREA!
ALL WE KNOW IS...

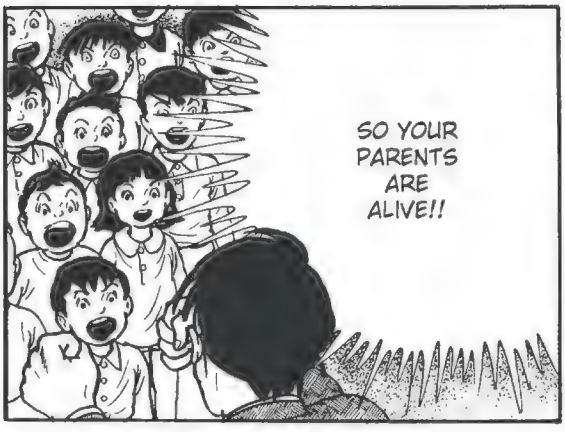
THAT'S RIGHT!!

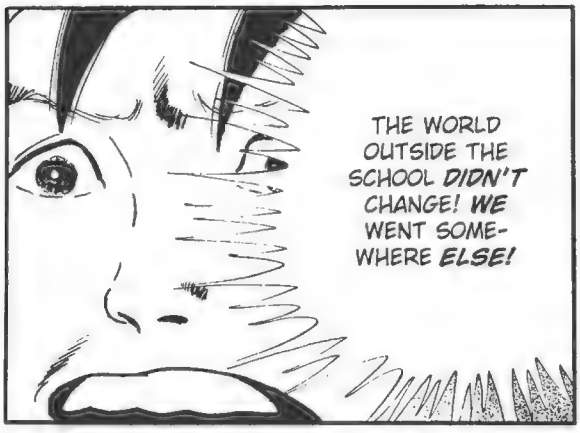
TELEPORTED?!

WE WILL EVENTUALLY.

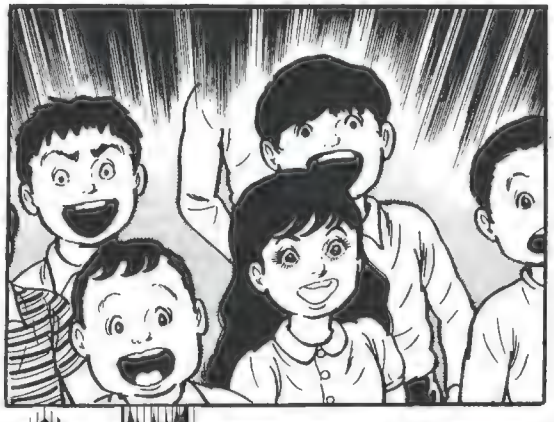
BUT WE DON'T KNOW WHERE!

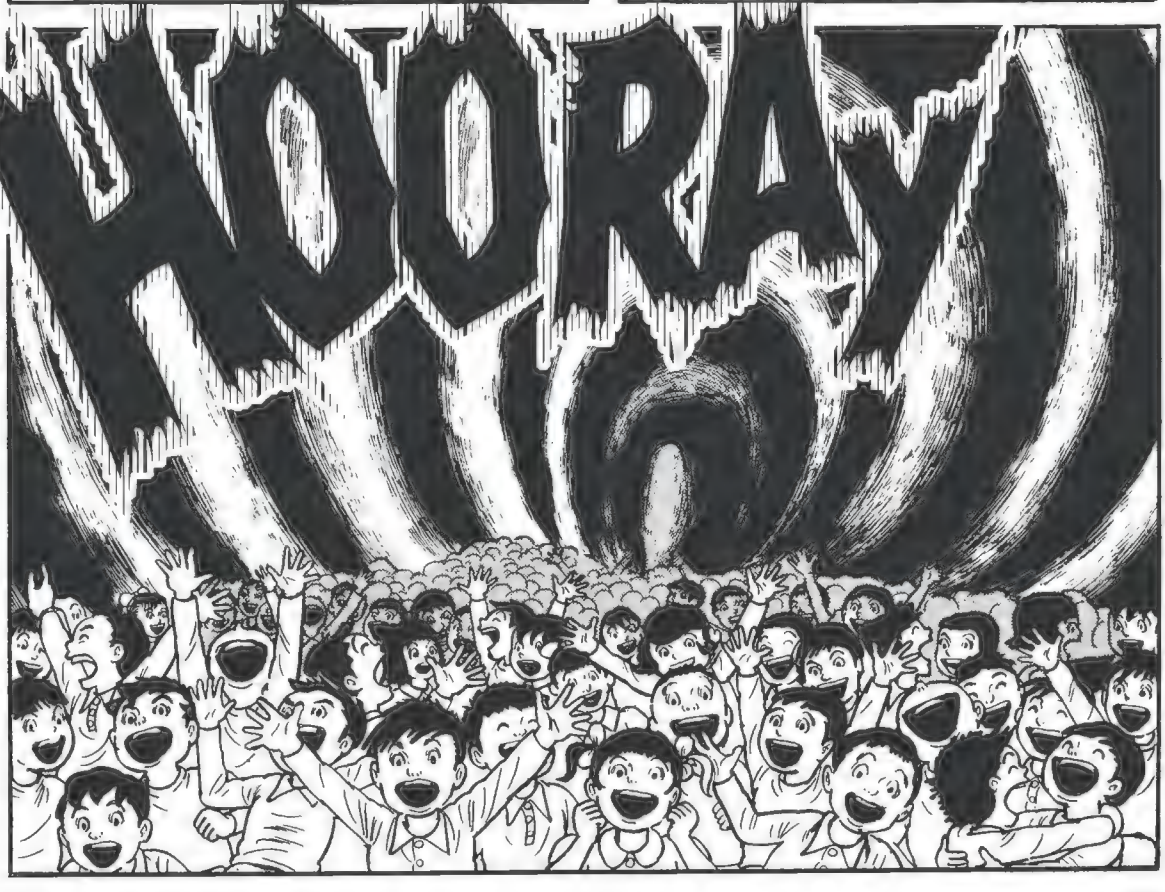
IT WAS VERY BRIEF...BUT IT WAS A JAPANESE NEWS STATION REPORTING OUR DISAPPEARANCE!!
I SAY THIS BECAUSE WE RECEIVED A RADIO SIGNAL...


SO YOUR PARENTS ARE ALIVE!!


THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL *DIDN'T* CHANGE! *WE* WENT SOMEWHERE *ELSE!*

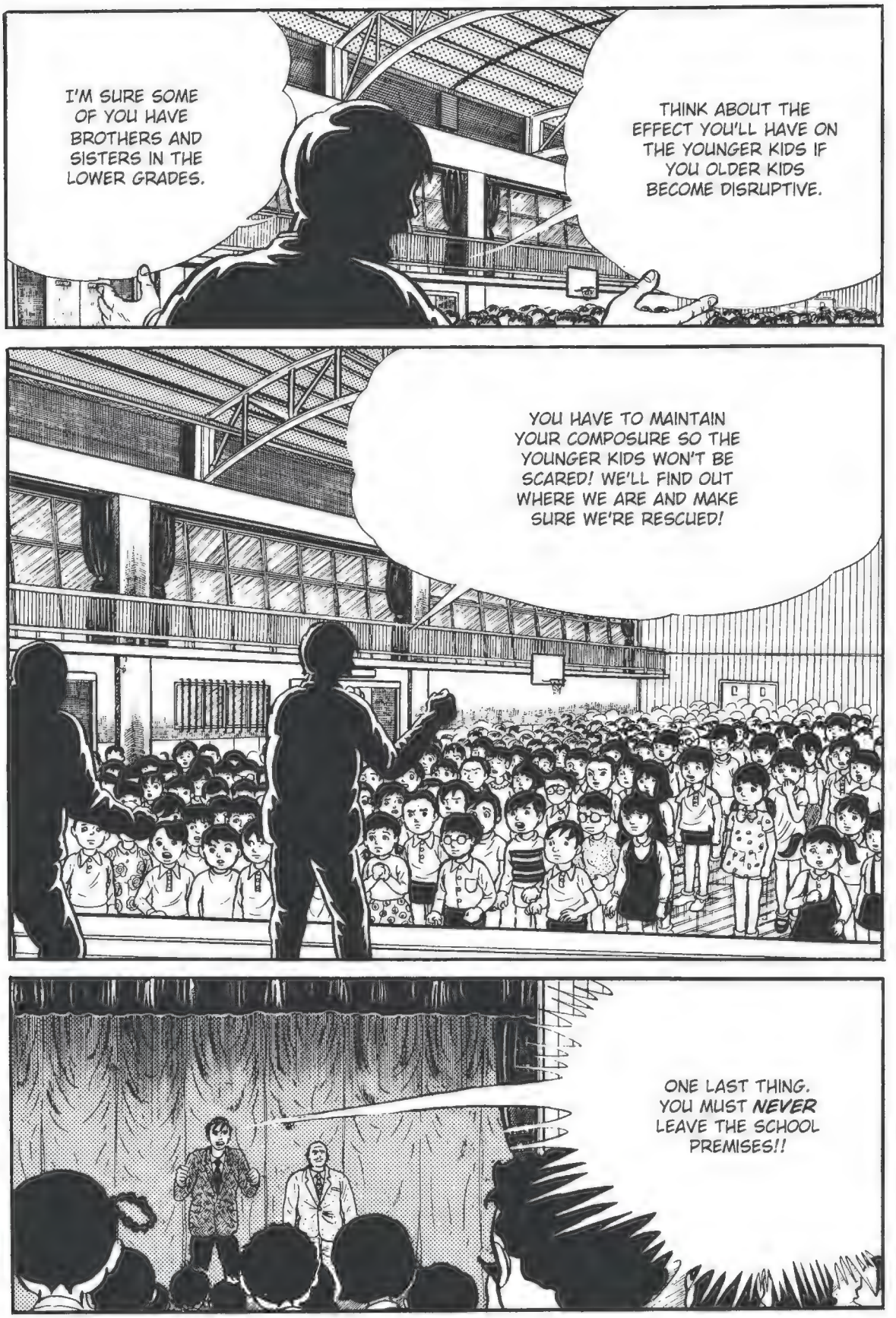
TH-THEY'RE ALIVE!!




HOORAY

YAY
YAY
YAAAY
YAY
HE'S LYING!!
YAY
YAY
YAY
YAY
YAAAY
HE'S LYING SO WE WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED!!
YAY
YAY
EVENTUALLY EVERYONE'S GOING TO REALIZE IT'S ALL A LIE!
THEY TOLD ME OUR PARENTS WERE DEAD! THEY MUST KNOW WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON!!

I'M SURE WE'LL BE RESCUED!!
I NEED YOUR ATTENTION!!
WE'RE SENDING A SMOKE SIGNAL FROM THE ROOFTOP.
WE HAVE TO STAY HERE UNTIL THEY FIND US AND SAVE US.
OF COURSE, THIS IS A SHOCKING NEW EXPERIENCE FOR YOU, BUT WE NEED YOU TO FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS. WE ALL NEED TO DO OUR PART.


I'M SURE SOME OF YOU HAVE BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE LOWER GRADES.
THINK ABOUT THE EFFECT YOU'LL HAVE ON THE YOUNGER KIDS IF YOU OLDER KIDS BECOME DISRUPTIVE.
YOU HAVE TO MAINTAIN YOUR COMPOSURE SO THE YOUNGER KIDS WON'T BE SCARED! WE'LL FIND OUT WHERE WE ARE AND MAKE SURE WE'RE RESCUED!
ONE LAST THING. YOU MUST NEVER LEAVE THE SCHOOL PREMISES!!

NOW PLEASE FOLLOW YOUR TEACHERS AND RETURN TO YOUR CLASSROOMS!
DO YOUR BEST TO EXPLAIN THE SITUATION TO YOUR YOUNGER BROTHERS AND SISTERS!! THAT'S ALL FOR NOW!!
I CAN'T EXPLAIN ANY MORE.
YES, I DO.
DO YOU REALLY THINK THE STUDENTS WILL BELIEVE SUCH A PREPOSTEROUS ANNOUNCEMENT?
THE OLDER KIDS HAVE DEVELOPED SOME FACULTY OF JUDGMENT. THE FIRST AND SECOND GRADERS HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON. WE HAVE TO WATCH OUT FOR THE THIRD GRADERS THOUGH. THEY'RE GOING TO BE A PROBLEM!!
IN ANY CASE, THEY MUSTN'T KNOW THE TRUTH!
THEY CAN HANDLE EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS. THINK OF ALL THE THINGS THEY'VE BEEN RAISED ON, THAT THEY'VE SEEN ON TV...

HEY, WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE THIRD GRADERS' BUILDING...?
THE FIRST GRADERS ARE SINGING...THEY DON'T KNOW YET.
LA LA LA LA
WE WENT BACK TO OUR CLASS-ROOMS.
LOOK AT THAT!
ONE OF MY STUDENTS GOT OUT!!
GASP!
H-HELP ME!!
AH!!
AIEE!!
SHUT UP!!
JAB

SPF

SPF

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?! COME BACK!
TAKESHI!!
THAT'S MY BROTHER!! SOMEBODY STOP HIM!!
WE'RE NOT ALLOWED TO!!
YOU CAN'T GO OUTSIDE, SAKI!!
IT'S ME, SAKI! CAN'T YOU HEAR ME!?
TAKESHI, COME BACK!!
SAKI, I'M GOING HOME!!

NO!

YOU MUSTN'T GO OUTSIDE!! YOU'LL DIE! COME BACK!!

STOP!!

HEY!
TAKESHI!!

AH!!

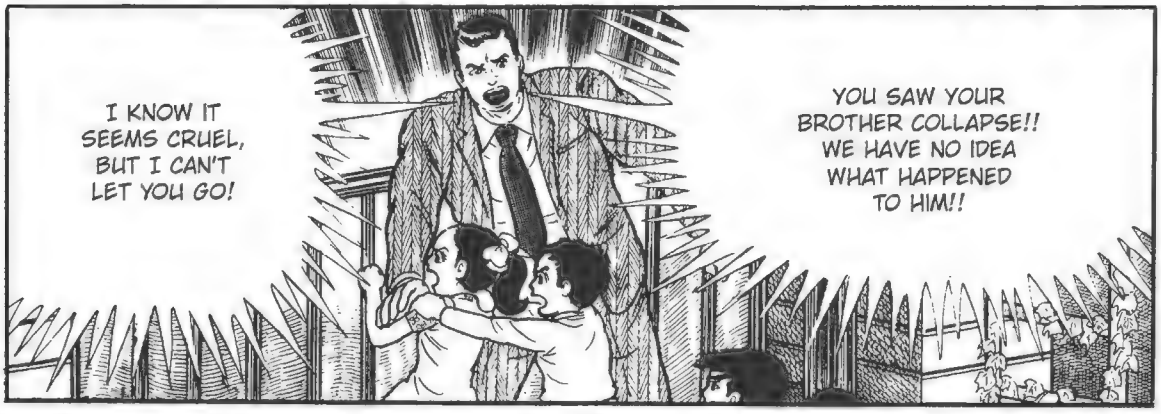
TAKESHI!!
WH-WHAT HAPPENED!?

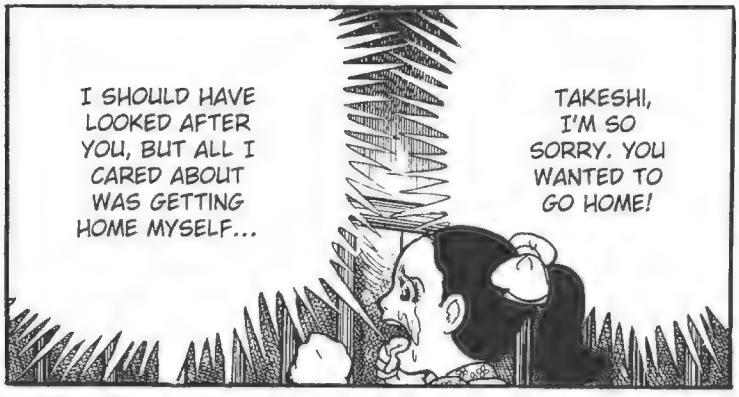
HE'S UNCONSCIOUS!! WHAT HAPPENED!?
HE'S NOT MOVING!!

TUMP
I HAVE TO RESCUE HIM!!
PLEASE SOMEONE!!
SOMEONE HELP HIM!!
SAKI!
NO!! STOP HER!!
CHAK
NO! I MEANT IT WHEN I SAID IT'S TOO DANGEROUS! WE CAN'T LEAVE THE PREMISES!!
IF WE DON'T RESCUE HIM, HE MIGHT REALLY DIE!!
IS MY BROTHER DEAD!? IS HE REALLY DEAD!? HE MIGHT STILL BE ALIVE!!

NO, ABSOLUTELY NOT!!

SAKI...!!
WHY!? HOW IS IT DANGEROUS!? IS THAT WHAT KILLED MY BROTHER!!? I NEED TO MAKE SURE...


I KNOW IT SEEMS CRUEL, BUT I CAN'T LET YOU GO!
YOU SAW YOUR BROTHER COLLAPSE!! WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM!!


I SHOULD HAVE LOOKED AFTER YOU, BUT ALL I CARED ABOUT WAS GETTING HOME MYSELF...
TAKESHI, I'M SO SORRY. YOU WANTED TO GO HOME!

TAKESHI !!

S-SAKI...! SOB...

SOB
...I FORGOT ALL ABOUT YOU. I'M SO SORRY!!

STOP CRYING. YOU'RE SIXTH GRADERS!!
WAAH!
NNHH ...
WAAH!
KIMURA, YOU HAVE A BROTHER IN THE SECOND GRADE...
NAKAGAWA, YOU HAVE A SISTER IN THE FIRST GRADE!
YOU HAVE SIBLINGS!!
MAYBE THAT'LL WAKE HIM UP!!
L-LET'S ALL CALL OUT TO HIM!
SOB SOB...
WAAH!

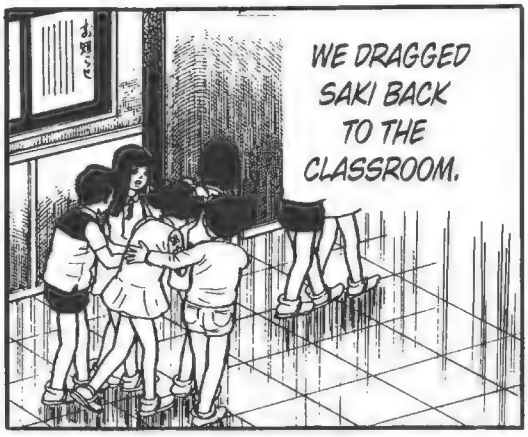
HEY
HEY!

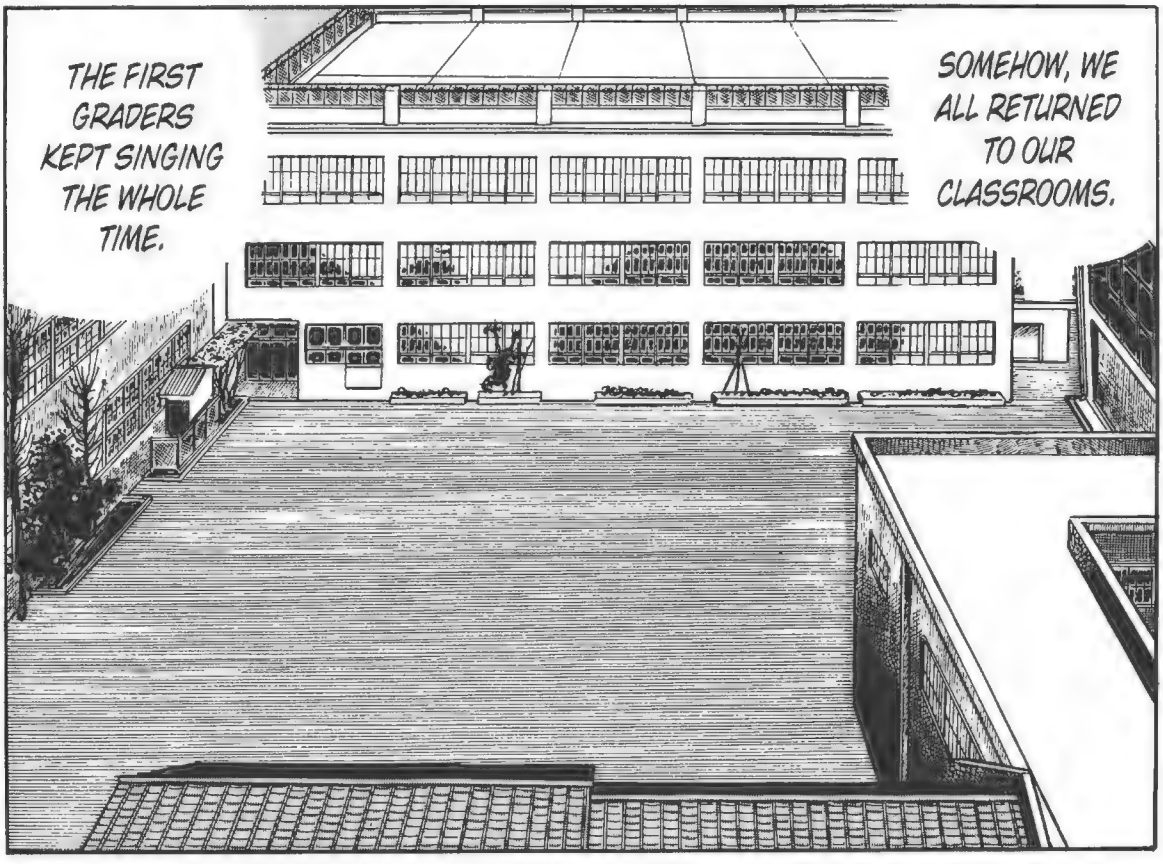
WAAAH!

NO MATTER HOW LOUD WE YELLED, SAKI'S BROTHER DIDN'T MOVE.

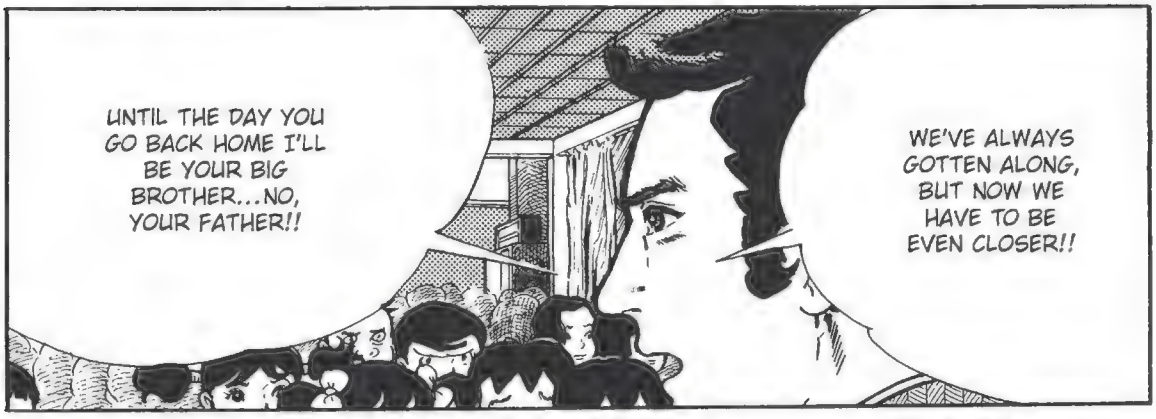
BUT WHERE WAS SHE? DID YOU REALLY DIE, MOTHER? IT COULDN'T BE TRUE!
AS WE WERE SHOUTING, I SUDDENLY RECALLED MY MOTHER'S FACE.

I COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT COULD EVER HAPPEN!
I JUST COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT MY MOTHER HAD DIED, THAT SHE DIDN'T EXIST ANYMORE.


WE DRAGGED SAKI BACK TO THE CLASSROOM.


THE FIRST GRADERS KEPT SINGING THE WHOLE TIME.
SOMEHOW, WE ALL RETURNED TO OUR CLASSROOMS.

EVERYONE...WE HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER LIKE WE'RE A FAMILY...

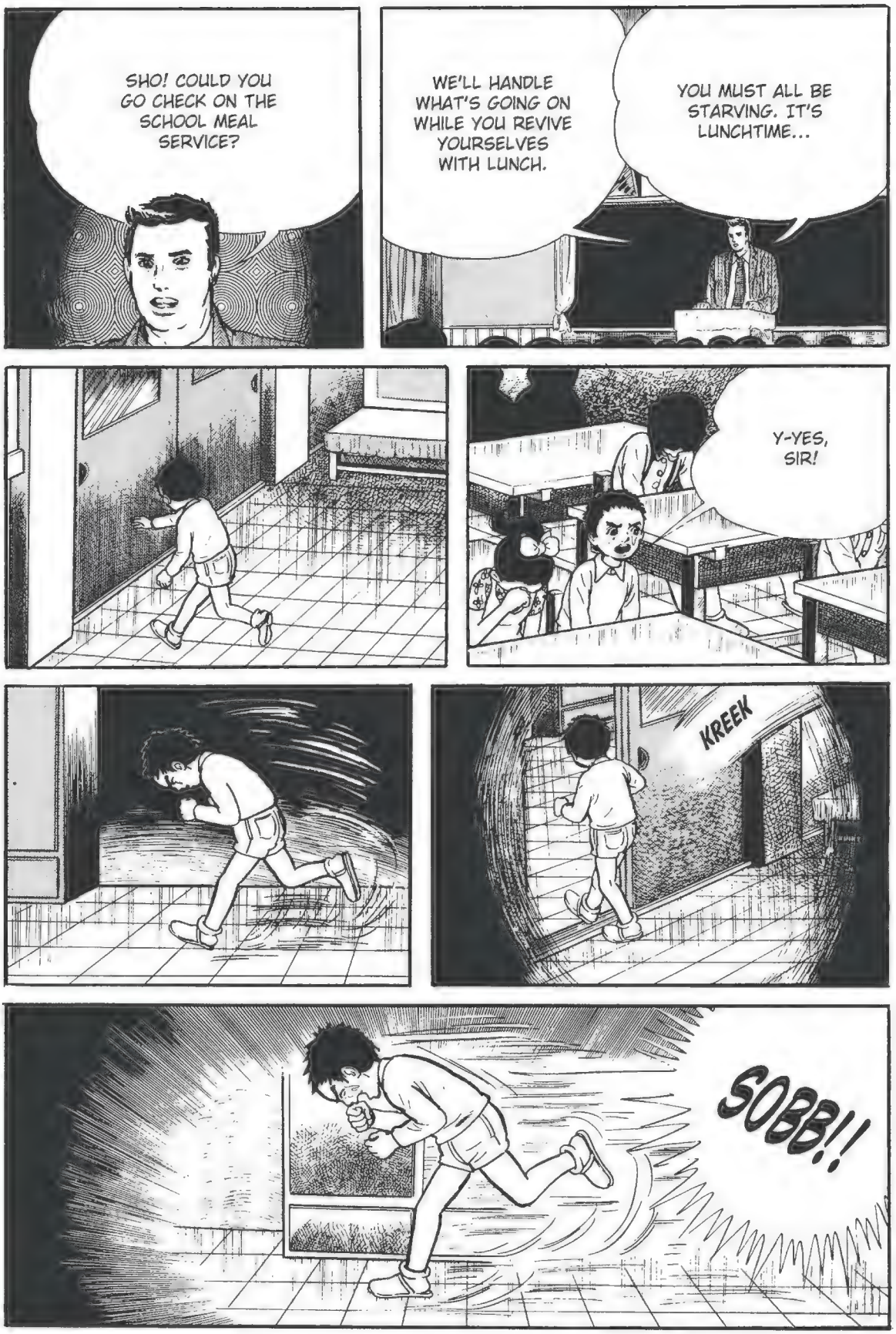

UNTIL THE DAY YOU GO BACK HOME I'LL BE YOUR BIG BROTHER...NO, YOUR FATHER!!
WE'VE ALWAYS GOTTEN ALONG, BUT NOW WE HAVE TO BE EVEN CLOSER!!

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!! WE CAN'T GO BACK!

SOB...

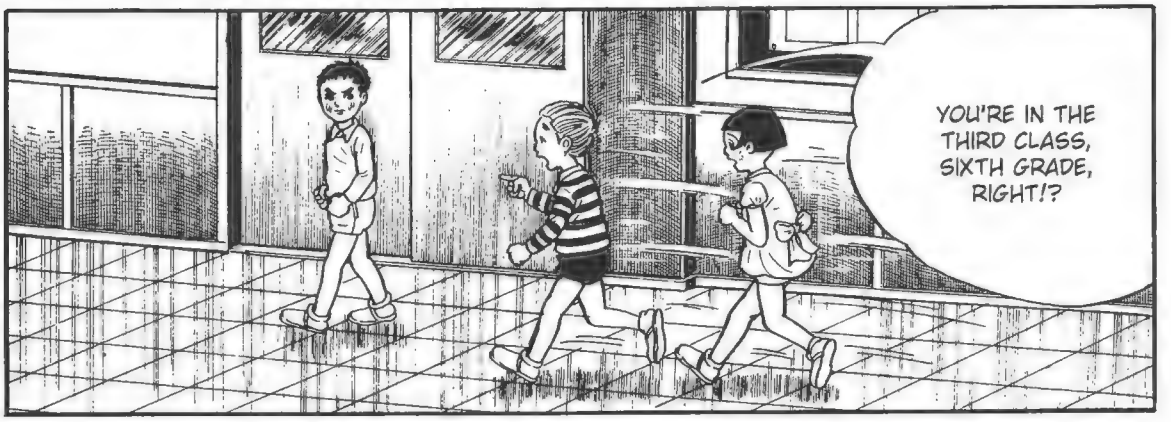
NNHH...!
SNIFF... SOB...

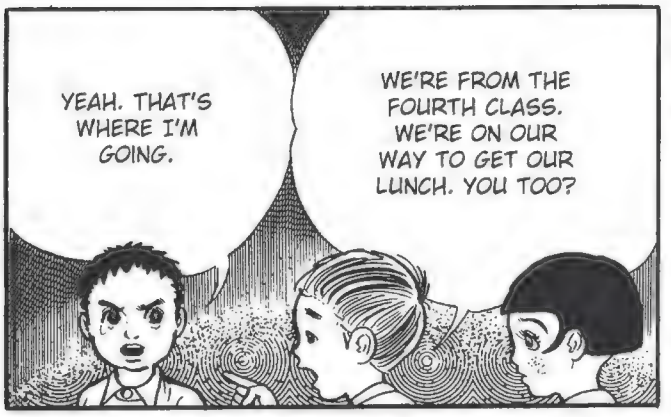
SOB...!
I KNOW EVERYONE'S DEAD. WE CAN'T GO BACK...
AND AS FOR SAKIKO'S...
YAMAMOTO FELL FROM THE ROOF...
WE'VE ALREADY HAD SEVERAL CASUALTIES FROM THIS EMERGENCY.
LET'S HAVE A MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR THE TWO OF THEM.
AS FOR SAKIKO'S BROTHER...HE HAD A STOMACHACHE SO HIS CLASSMATES TIED UP THE TEACHER SO HE COULD GO HOME. YOU SAW WHAT HAPPENED. YOU MUST STAY IN THE SCHOOL...
SNIFF... SOB...
TAKAMATSU... YOU'VE BEEN VERY STRONG THROUGH ALL THIS...
SOB...


SHO! COULD YOU GO CHECK ON THE SCHOOL MEAL SERVICE?
WE'LL HANDLE WHAT'S GOING ON WHILE YOU REVIVE YOURSELVES WITH LUNCH.
YOU MUST ALL BE STARVING. IT'S LUNCHTIME...
Y-YES, SIR!
KREEK
SOBB!!

I WAS CERTAIN MR. WAKAHARA KNEW HOW MUCH I NEEDED TO CRY OUT LOUD.
SOBB!
WAAH
AS SOON AS I GOT OUT OF THE ROOM I STARTED CRYING LOUDER AND LOUDER.
GIVEN HOW INSENSITIVE I'D BEEN, MOTHER, I'M SURE IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE ME DOING THAT.
TEARS FELL BY MY FEET.
I WALKED TOWARD THE LUNCH ROOM.
I FELT DIZZY. I REALIZED THAT I HADN'T HAD ANYTHING TO EAT ALL DAY.

HEY!!


YOU'RE IN THE THIRD CLASS, SIXTH GRADE, RIGHT!?

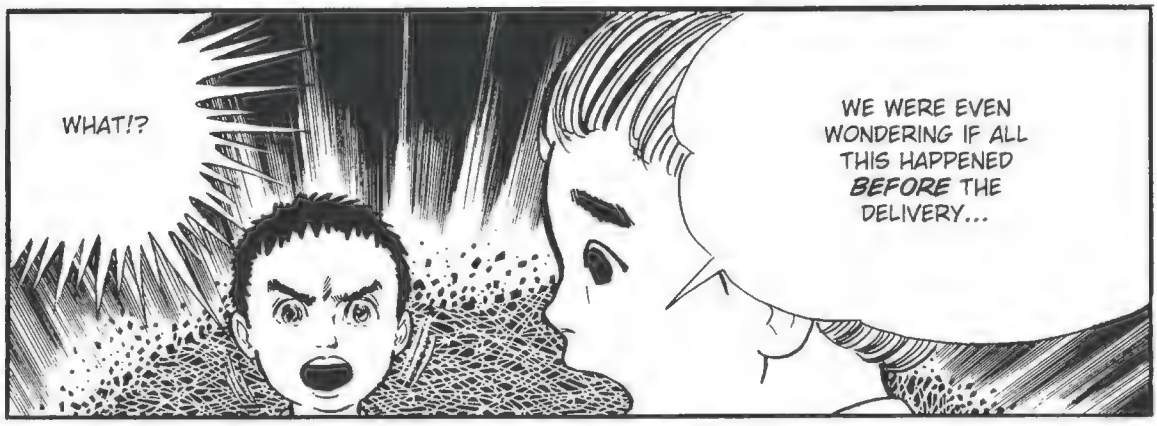

YEAH. THAT'S WHERE I'M GOING.
WE'RE FROM THE FOURTH CLASS. WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO GET OUR LUNCH. YOU TOO?

UH-HUH ...

WHAT!?
EVERYONE'S BEEN SAYING IF WE EAT LUNCH WE MIGHT NOT HAVE ANY FOOD LEFT...

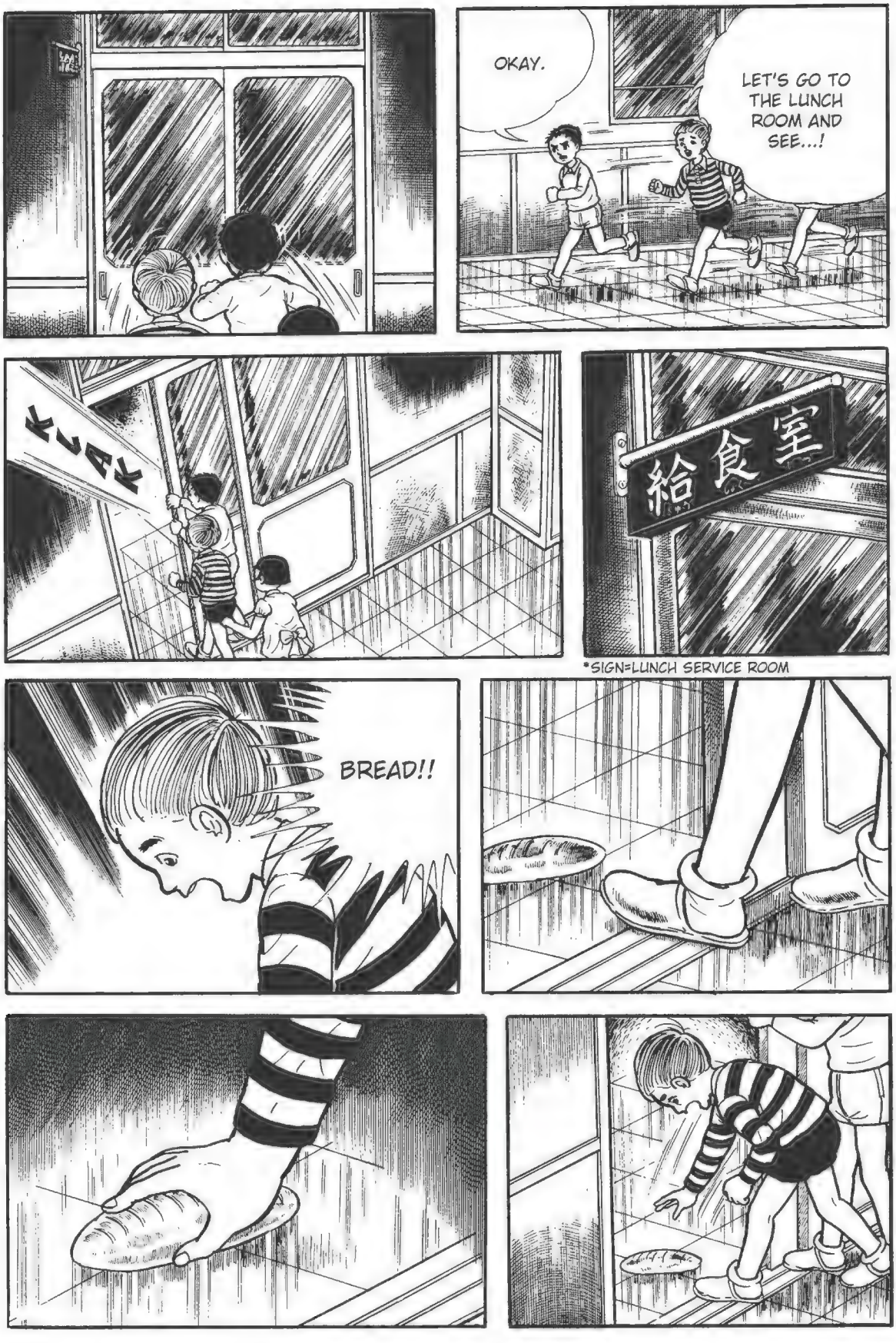
AND BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED, WE WON'T FIND FOOD ANYWHERE ELSE.

WELL, THE SCHOOL ONLY GETS FOOD DELIVERED ONCE A DAY, RIGHT?


WHAT!?
WE WERE EVEN WONDERING IF ALL THIS HAPPENED *BEFORE* THE DELIVERY...

...STARVE TO DEATH!!

I-IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN WE'LL ALL...

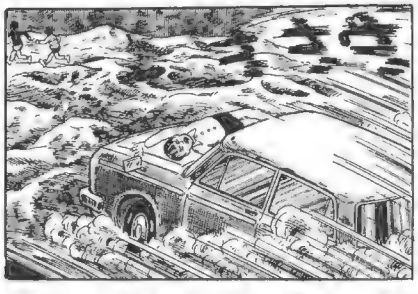


*SIGN=LUNCH SERVICE ROOM

FRK
AIBBI

TO BE CONTINUED...

IN THE NEXT VOLUME...



Madness takes hold as the teachers and students realize they are trapped in a lifeless world! Sekiya, the cafeteria worker, takes control of the school's food supplies, enforcing his authority with a gun. As the adults start to fight among one another, sixth-grader Sho makes the startling discovery of where they are and what has happened to them. Soon, Sho and his classmates must venture into the wasteland beyond the school gates...and make the choice between a slow death from hunger or a quick death at a killer's hands...

AVAILABLE OCTOBER 2006!

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

KAZUO UMEZU

By Patrick Macias

"You'll never believe who just passed by," my neighbor's excited voice on the phone was saying. "Kazuo Umezu! I didn't see him, but my wife did. Now I'm going around the neighborhood to see if I can track him down!"

I live in Tokyo (at least part of the year, anyway), on the west side, near Kichijoji station. This laid-back part of town is known for its animation studios. The Studio Ghibli museum is here also. And, to cap it all off, it's where Kazuo Umezu, the author of *The Drifting Classroom,* makes his home.

One reason my friend was reacting as if a mythological creature (a leprechaun, maybe) had just been sighted in the vicinity is that, according to the locals, to see Umezu in his natural habitat means you've been blessed with good luck. (But of course, it's more complicated than that. Exactly *what* kind of luck depends on the color of striped sweater he's wearing that day. Umezu only wears striped sweaters, with his red and white ones being the best known.)

It's a strange and wonderful thing to imagine, but apparently, it happens quite a bit: the inhabitants of Kichijoji dashing through the streets to get a peek at the famed manga-ka. Because, as Umezu himself once said in interview, "If you are chasing someone, it is a joke. But if you are the one being chased, this is horror."

In Japan, "Kazuo Umezu" is as much of a brand name of horror as "Edgar Allan Poe" or "Stephen King." Audiences have eagerly consumed his distinctive works in the genre for generations, through his original manga or numerous television and movie adaptations. His moniker even graces the famed Kazuo Umezu Haunted Mansion, a seasonal attraction in Tokyo top-rated by connoisseurs of that type of thing.

There's also Umezu the "gag manga" artist. The single most popular creation associated with "Kazz" (as he's often referred to) is the snot-nosed and scatologically obsessed wild child Makoto-chan. First introduced in 1971, the grotesque and rudely funny *Makoto-chan* series became a national sensation, spawning an animated film as well as a lucrative merchandising boom in the guise of Makoto-chan key chains, pencil sharpeners, and miniature toilets.

It's been a lifetime of alternating between fits of laughter and bouts of terror, much like the imagination and moods of a child.

Kazuo Umezu was born September 3, 1936 in Wakayama, a rural prefecture located on the coast of southwest Japan. Nurtured on *Grimm's Fairy Tales,* encouraged by his parents, and inspired—like so many others of his generation—by Osamu Tezuka's groundbreaking postwar comics, the young Umezu produced amateur manga at a prodigious rate. At age 18, two of his comics, both of which he'd authored while still in junior high school, were acquired and published by a regional rental comics library. Umezu spent the first phase of his professional career in the mid-fifties creating works exclusively for the rental market.

As the pay library market began to shrink, artists flocked to Tokyo to find employment with the major publishers, who were themselves hungry for new talent to fill the pages of their burgeoning weekly and monthly manga magazines. Umezu created new works for both shojo (girls) and shonen (boys) anthologies. His early- to mid-sixties titles (which are said to have intimidated Tezuka himself) were amazingly diverse and ran the gamut from starry-eyed romance to adventure, from science fiction to giant monster stories—including a very strange *Ultraman* adaptation.

As the decade neared conclusion, Umezu finally shook the strong Tezuka influence that had dominated his youth and began to work in an increasingly original and uncanny vein. His horror works culminated in his 1969-1970 serial *Orochi,* a mix of heavy gothic atmosphere and tight pulp storytelling in the best *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* tradition.

Following *Orochi,* Umezu became a full-blown multimedia star with his *Makoto-chan* manga. He even made forays into rock and roll as the front man of the Makoto-chan band (whose hit single was "Diarrhea Pants Rock").

Somewhere in the midst of all this activity, Umezu began serializing *The Drifting Classroom* in 1972 in the pages of *Shonen Sunday* magazine. So began the next, most ambitious phase of Umezu's body of work.

With their emphasis on biology, evolution, and Big Ideas, *The Drifting Classroom, My Name Is Shingo*

KAZUO UMEZU'S SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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(1982-86), and *Fourteen* (1990-95) (see Selected Bibliography, below) were unprecedented epics in the field of manga, and were certainly Umezu's most impressive artistic statements. And of the bunch, *The Drifting Classroom* is the best known and most widely read.

In the career-overview book *Kazuo Umezu* (Kawada Shobo Shinsha, 2004), critic Yuuichiro Kurihara speculates on *Drifting Classroom's* popularity: "It appears to be a human drama about children who begin from a state of no hope, and eventually come back to hopefulness."

But what about the world they inherit?

Kurihara again: "You have to consider that Umezu's later work depicts the end of humanity. In that respect, *Drifting Classroom* is really the doorway to the extinction of the human race."

In later works, such as the apocalyptic *Fourteen*, a spiraling cosmic madness quickly eclipses concerns like survival and feeling good about the future. By contrast, *Drifting Classroom* still seems like an oasis, a fountain of hope surrounded by ruins. After all, despite the death, despair, and treachery, the children in the story also become fully realized human beings—adults on their own terms, really—by overcoming the adults around them.

Umezu himself is now well into his sixties, but he remains the portrait of the eternal child. And in the same books where we are asked to consider *The Drifting Classroom* as an entryway to the abyss, there is a picture of Kazz himself swinging like a loon from the branches of the cherry blossom trees.

Looks like fun to me.

Patrick Macias is the author of *TokyoScope: The Japanese Cult Film Companion* (Cadence Books) and the co-author of *Cruising the Anime City: An Otaku Guide to Neo-Tokyo* (Stone Bridge Press).

1 Brother and Sister's Forest (*Mori no kyôdai,* 1955) Umezu's first published work—a "Hansel and Gretel" story he drew in junior high school.

2 Another World (*Bessekai,* 1955) Neolithic kids in prehistoric times stumble into a strange world of cannibalism and giant mosquito people. Umezu's second published work.

3 Comical Naughty Story (*Nakiwarai yancha monogatari,* 1955) Loud and obnoxious Osaka-style gag comedy strip about a mischievous girl named Yasuko.

4 Doll Girl (*Ningyo shojo,* 1959) Umezu first began drawing classically big-eyed shojo manga with this tear-jerking story about a poor girl adopted by a nice family. The catch is, to earn her keep, she must babysit a doll. Realistic postwar setting.

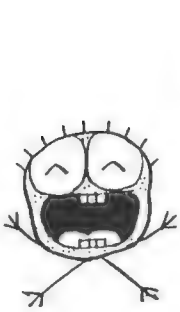
5 Medicine of Romance (*Romance no kusuri,* 1961) Starry-eyed female protagonist struggles to make the man of her dreams take "Love Potion #9." The first in the *Romance* series.

6 Cat Face (*Neko men,* 1963) Deformed peeping tom falls in love with a beautiful woman and starts torturing her suitors. Supernatural revenge story set in ancient Japan drawn in a raw, brutal style.

7 Lost World—Gamora (1964-1965) Giant monster action in the Godzilla tradition. Multi-generational plot begins in ancient Japan, then jumps to the present day for massive city stomping.

8 Girl with Cat's Eyes (*Nekome no shojo,* 1965) Poe's "Black Cat" given the Umezu twist. The Master of the House hates cats—unfortunately his daughter looks like one. He poisons her, and she makes wooden cat statues to enact revenge.

9 Ultraman (1966-1967) Adaptation of the classic superhero TV show. Deviates from televised version in bizarre and wonderful ways as Umezu had only seen the pilot episode.



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10 ***Laughing Mask*** (*Warai kamen,* 1967) As a result of a government conspiracy, a biologist is forced to wear a ghoulish mask. Two boy detectives cross his path and learn the truth about the giant ants he's studying. Sci-fi-adventure-mystery mix points toward later works such as *The Drifting Classroom.*

11 ***Face of Scales*** (*Uroko no kao,* 1968) Seemingly another snake-girl story, but this time the transformation of the heroine into a giant serpent is astonishingly grotesque.

12 ***Shadow*** (*Kage,* 1968) Beautiful girl obsessed with her mirror begins to battle her own demonic reflection. Umezu's art and background details take giant leaps.

13 ***The Snake Girl and the Silver-Haired Witch*** (*Hebi musume to hakuhatsu ma,* 1968) A home invasion by the title characters scares the hell out of a little girl. Also a 1968 movie from Daiei, in which Umezu has a cameo as a cab driver.

14 ***Cat's Eye Kid*** (*Nekome kozo,* 1967-1968, 1976) A ghost-story anthology built around the wanderings of a strange little kid with cat's eyes through Japan.

15 ***Orochi*** (1969-1970) A mysterious girl named Orochi (an old Japanese word for "serpent") drifts across a gloomy landscape in a loosely connected series of short suspense stories. In 2002, VIZ released a single volume in the series as *Orochi: Blood.*

16 ***Dali's Man*** (*Dali no otoko,* 1969) Disturbing fun with artists and models. Visuals inspired by Salvador Dali.

17 ***Iara*** (1970) A man searching for the meaning of the word "Iara" travels through time and space in a strange short story anthology. The adult-strength version of *Orochi.*

18 ***Again*** (1970-1972) Old man takes medicine that turns him into a high school kid. Hangs out with his grandson. This shonen gag breakthrough led to *Makoto-chan.*

19 ***Makoto-chan*** (1971) See intro.

20 ***The Drifting Classroom*** (*Hyouryû kyôshitsu,* 1972-1974) See intro.

21 ***Album of the Dark*** (*Yami no album,* 1974-1975) Twenty-four black-humor short stories of free-flowing surrealism. Relentless graphic experimentation—also spawned a concept LP by Umezu.

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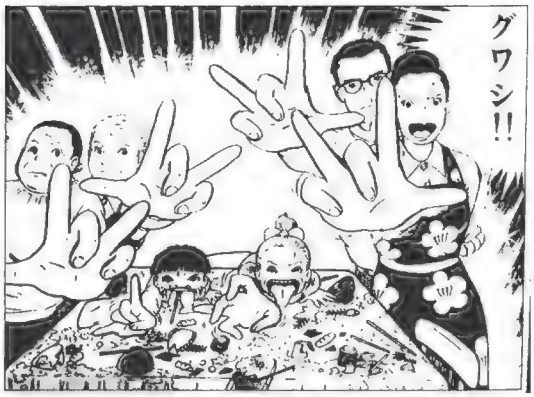

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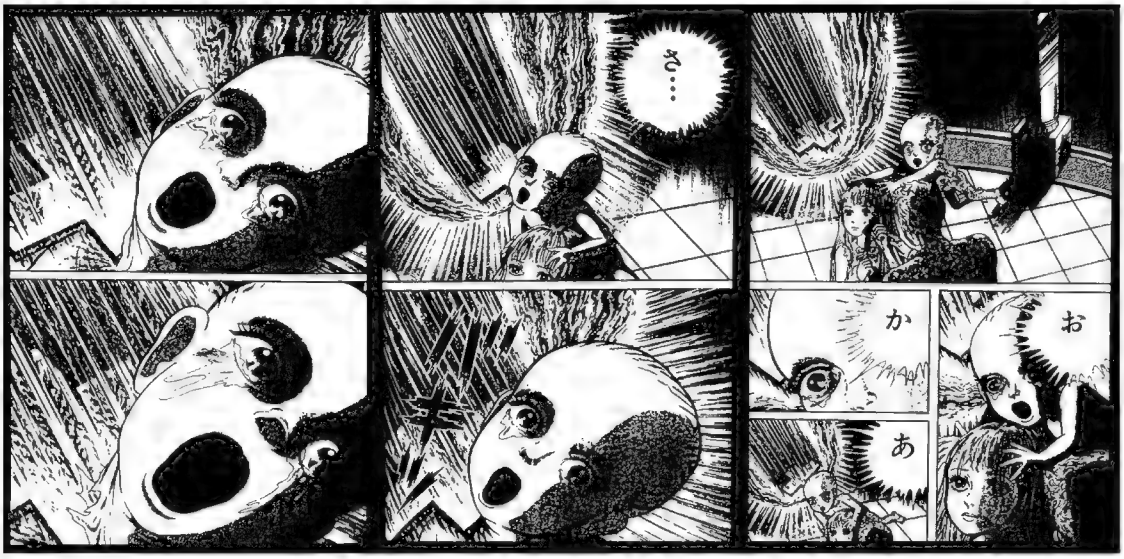

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22 Baptism (*Senrei,* 1974-1976) An aging actress plots to switch brains with her beautiful young daughter so she can relive her youth. Things don't quite work out, though. Film adaptation available on video in US as *Baptism of Blood.*

23 My Name Is Shingo (*Watashi wa Shingo,* 1982-1986) Star-crossed lovers, a boy and girl, inadvertently program a factory robot arm into sentience. After the boy and girl are separated, the robot arm wanders the earth. This popular love-story sci-fi classic is an epic account of the human experience.

24 The Left Hand of God, the Right Hand of the Devil (*Kami no hidarite, akuma no migite,* 1986-1989) Umezu's most relentless "pure horror" work: a masterpiece of the abnormal, of dream and reality colliding head on. A young boy experiences visions and nightmares as his sister suddenly begins vomiting forth stranger and stranger objects. It all goes back to a gruesome serial killing spree that occurred before they were born and still haunts the local community.

25 Fourteen (1990-1995) One day in the bleak near-future, a scientist discovers that a lump of chicken meat is becoming sentient. The lump eventually grows into Chicken George, a half-chicken, half-man creature who seeks revenge on humanity for their mistreatment of animals. Things get complicated when he falls in love with a human girl.

Thanks to Izumi Evers, Tomo Machiyama, and Yuji Oniki. •

THE DRIFTING CLASSROOM
Vol. 1

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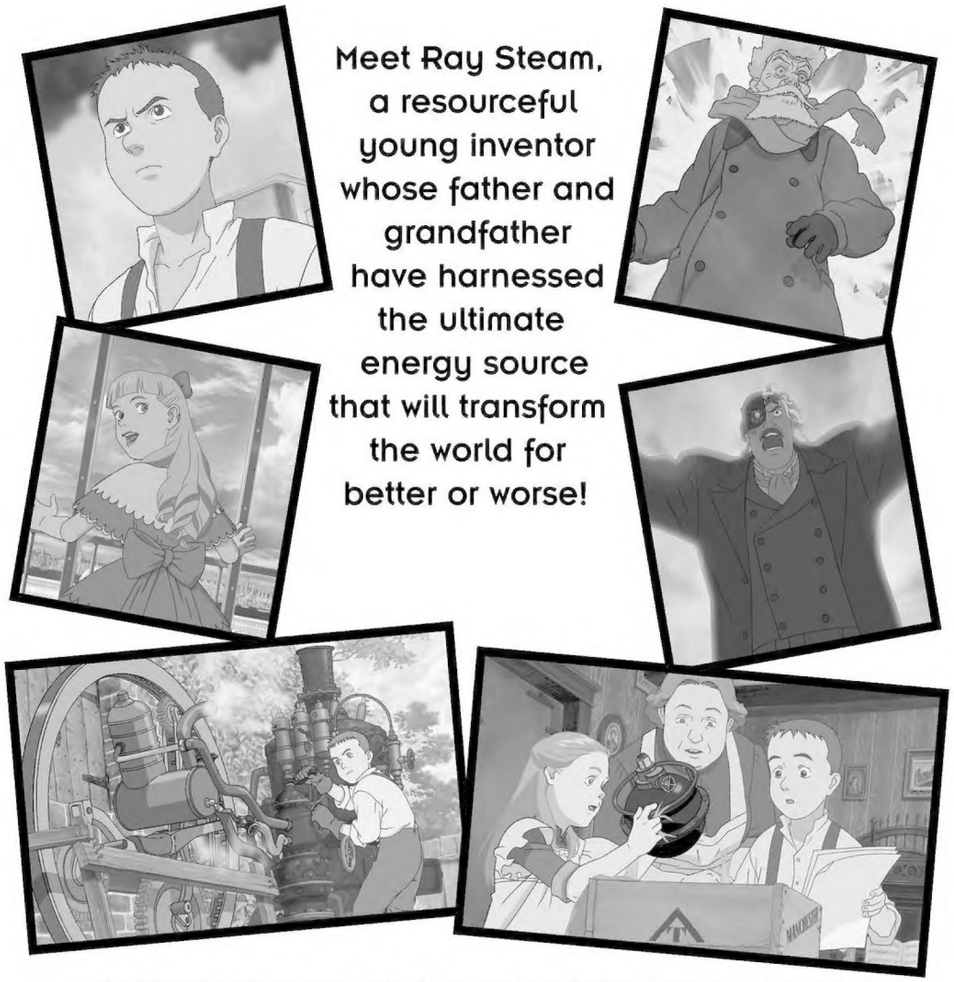

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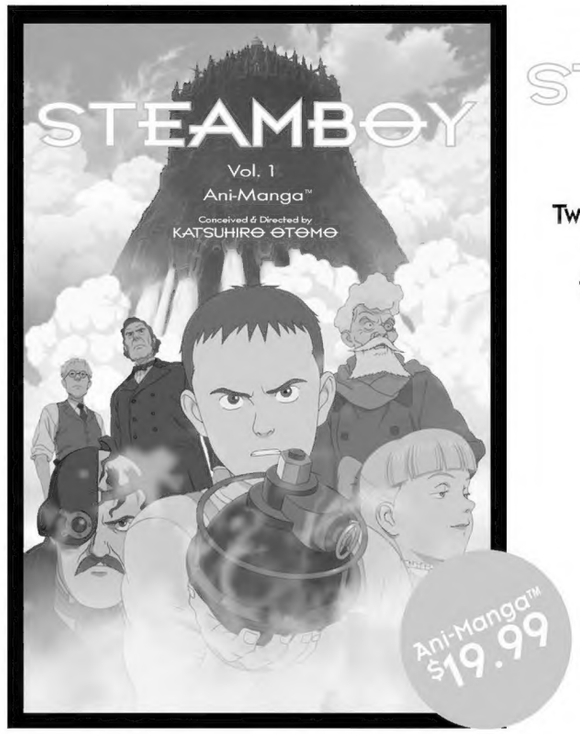

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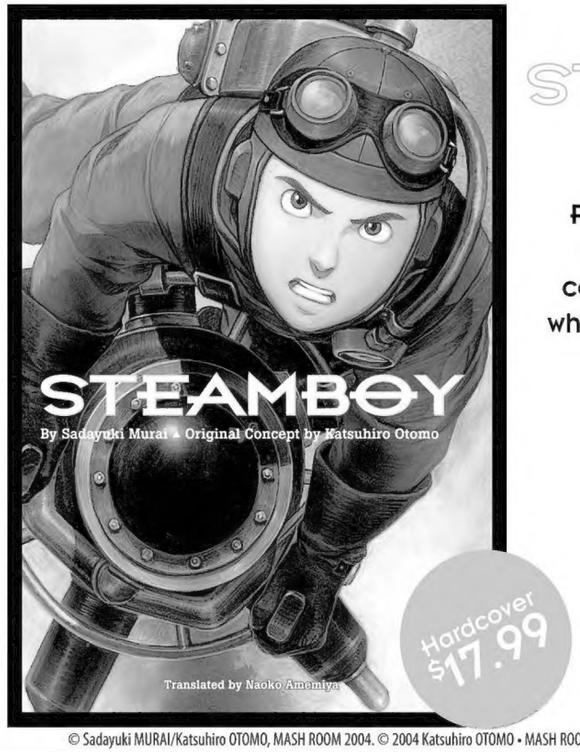

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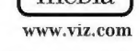

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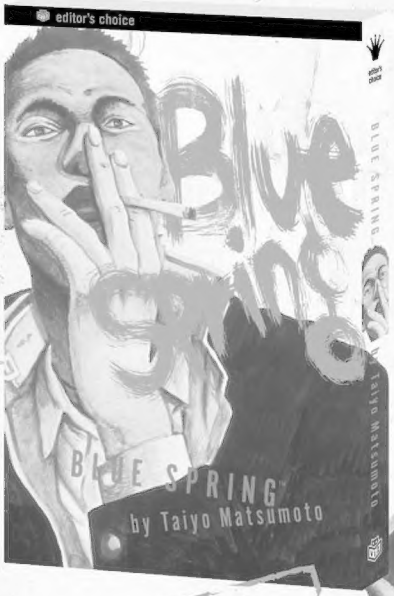

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